This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

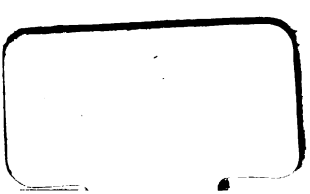
Slav. 3078.55

Harvard College Library

FROM THE FUND OF

CHARLES MINOT
(Class of 1828).

Received Dec. 8, 1900.



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

1. Opposite.

2. Skizze von Kurzeland. 1796.

Digitized by Google

C11

13936

RUSSIA

AS IT IS AT THE PRESENT TIME.

In a Series of Letters.

BY JAMES CARR,

A WORKING MAN,

LATELY RETURNED FROM THE INTERIOR OF THAT EMPIRE TO ENGLAND.

SECOND EDITION—PRICE SIXPENCE,

Revised and Corrected,

LONDON:

WHITTAKER & CO.

MANCHESTER: JAMES GALT & CO., DUCIE STREET, EXCHANGE.

1855.

Digitized by Google

Slav 3078.55

~~Slav.677.10~~

DEC 8 19[illegible]

LIBRARY

Minor fund

MANCHESTER:

GALT, KERRUISH, AND GENT, PRINTERS, 28, NEW CANNON STREET.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE prompt sale which the first edition of this little work met with, although only printed for local circulation, and the kind remarks made on the production by the very few literary organs to which copies were sent, have induced the author to commit a second edition to the press. Having resided for some time in the interior of Russia, he has had abundant opportunities of making observations on the customs, manners, and habits of the Russian people. The church, religion, and laws of Russia, combine to keep up and perpetuate the ancient Holy-days, and numerous *Fast-days* of the Greek profession, and afford plenty of time and excellent facilities for travelling in the interior, and learning the real character of the Russian peasantry, as it is in their own homes and villages, and of visiting either Moscow or Petersburg, and contrasting the City life with that of the Serfs in the interior of the empire. These Holydays (which sometimes last for weeks together) gave the author opportunities for observation of which he resolved to make some use, and he lost no chance of taking down notes of, and making observations on, every thing that he thought would be amusing or instructive to his countrymen when he returned home.

In the following little work the author lays claim to neither style, elegance, nor learning, and only desires it to be regarded as sketches by a plain working-man; and if it should tend to amuse or instruct the class to which he belongs, he will be amply satisfied. There is one thing, however, he can lay claim to—that is TRUTH: his narratives are facts of which he was an eye-witness. As to the defects in language, style and expression, the reader's indulgence is respectfully entreated.

J. CARR,
Wrigley-street, Blackburn.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

RUSSIA AS IT IS.

LETTER I.

HAVING resided some time in Russia, (where I went to overlook a cotton mill,) and recently returned home, I thought perhaps a few letters on the habits, customs, and manners of the Russian people, and on the country itself, might be interesting to the people of England; I purpose, therefore, to give such information on various subjects, respecting that people and country, as I have gained by personal observation and experience.

As the Russian soldiery is at the present time occupying a considerable share of public attention, perhaps a word or two concerning those ill-fated, or rather ill-used people, would be now interesting. I may state that the Russian army is replenished or kept up in the following manner:—the emperor keeps an account of the number of people belonging to each baron, which account is regularly revised once, twice, or thrice a year, as his majesty thinks fit to order. What I mean is, that a regular entry is made and sent in to the emperor, of the births and deaths on every estate throughout the empire; so that the emperor is always in possession of the number of people belonging to every baron: and he also knows how many effective men they have; for, when this account is taken, it includes information as to the number of sick, how many males and females, their respective ages, and other particulars. Therefore, when the emperor is in want of soldiers, he takes some from each baron, in exact proportion to the number of people they possess. Thus, for instance, if a baron with 1,000 people has to send 10 of them to the emperor for soldiers, a baron with 500 people will have to send 5, and so on, greater or less, as the demand may be. This, you will see, is fair (if any fairness there be in such a system);

Digitized by Google

but I never knew a baron make any objection to furnish his quota to the army; indeed, there would be little good in making objections, unless they all did it, and did it at once; for, if one baron refused, he might look out for confiscation of his property (that is, his people), and begin to occupy his mind with thoughts of Siberia. O that Siberia! they all seem to mention it with horror! I shall give some particulars respecting it in a subsequent letter. At the works where I was employed, the government official several times visited us for men. He only showed the emperor's seal, with the number of men wanted; and the steward of the estate found them at once, and off they went with him in a few minutes. I have seen the steward come through the works and say to this man, "Come, you must go for a soldier (or, as they call it, *soldatt*); be quick, the man is waiting for you:" then to another, and another, and another, with the same words, until he had procured his number. If the man had any relations working in the same room, he would shake hands with them and bid them good bye—for ever! But, if they were in another room, or any place where it was not convenient for them to be seen at once and without loss of time, this favour was not allowed them. At other times, the official, perhaps, was in no hurry; and then the parties destined for *soldatts* could have gone round and bid farewell to all their friends and relations: but I have frequently known it when their own *parents*, at a short distance, have not been acquainted with the circumstance of their sons being marched off for soldiers until some time afterwards; and on many occasions the relatives of the person at the same works have not known until the people were released for dinner or supper, as the case might be. Many a time have I known men fetched out of the factory for soldiers, whose wives have been in entire ignorance about their departure until long afterwards. To make this plainer, I must digress a little. You must remember, when a baron runs a factory, he gathers up the hands from his estate or estates, and sends them to work at the mill, although it may be, and often is (as ours was), thirty miles from the estates. Men, women, and children, no matter, are all fed, sleep, and are provided for at the works. He prepares large rooms, in which all his hands are to eat, sleep, and be accommodated, and who are then never allowed to go outside the mill gate without

Digitized by Google

leave. You will now see the possibility of a father, husband, or son being taken from the mill to the army, and his relations at the estate knowing nothing of the matter; for, you must observe, there is no consideration paid to the ties of nature, or family connections: children or adults, wives or husbands—no matter, if they can only be spared from the land or the estate—are taken away to the mill as they are needed, so that often the parents have three or four children working in a mill twenty or thirty miles off. Now, although the people almost dread going for soldiers, I never saw any of our hands offer any resistance. I have known some of them who had the subtilty to render themselves not perfect. They could either take something inwardly, or apply something outwardly, that would cause their whole body to be covered with a sort of "rash," and, when examined, appeared in a filthy, unhealthy condition, and were, therefore, returned "not perfect," to be exchanged for another; and I sincerely believe if they had but previous warning they would all be found "not perfect." When I left Russia, the want of men caused them to be less strict in this examination, and doubtless it is always regulated according to circumstances. The army is always made up of the very worst of characters. I will explain. Our steward had a book called the "soldier's book," in which were entered the names of those persons fixed upon to go next. This book was strictly private, and the inspection of it was only allowed to himself and the manager. Whenever they had an idle, worthless, troublesome, profligate fellow, and one who was noted for theft, (for they are the greatest thieves in the world), who perhaps stole more than the worth of his labour, *his* name was entered in the "soldiers' book," and marked as one to go next; and, of course, every baron adopts the same plan. This, then, explains how the army is composed of the most worthless characters.

LETTER II.

In my last I stated that the Russian soldiery was composed of the worst of characters. Just another instance to prove this, and to show the means used to get them into the army, and it shall suffice. A young man employed on the same works as myself, was a continual trouble and annoyance to the

Digitized by Google

masters, on account of his propensity for, and tact in stealing. I have known him to remain in, or be locked in the mill at a night when the next day was a holiday (for the mills where I was never stop, night or day, only at holidays), and during the night, and in the dark, he would go from one machine to another, taking out the brass steps, bushes, pedestals, and any other thing made of brass, to the weight of ten, fifteen, or twenty pounds. These he would hide, and, as opportunity offered, he would take them to the nearest town to sell. When the mill started, two or three machines would have to stand still till refitted again. This individual was three or four times flogged whilst I was there, and so severely that he was confined in the hospital for weeks at once, but all to no purpose. As soon as he was ready for work he was ready for theft, and never very long before he gave proof of this. It was, therefore, a loss to have him on the works, and also a loss to have him in the hospital. But what could be done with him? He was the master's property. They had tried him in all sorts of places, and at all sorts of jobs, to no avail whatever. They had long pronounced him fit for nothing but the army; but how was he to be got into the army, for he had hitherto defeated them in all their attempts to get him there? Confident his name was always in the "soldiers' book," as one to go next, he always had some issue, running, rash, or other unhealthy appearance on his body, that caused him to be rejected as often as tried. In vain they represented to the official that it was his own doing. The only reply was—"It is no errand of mine to enquire into these matters; bring me a perfect man, and be quick." The masters had tried to bribe the head official at Moscow in this case; but they had not offered enough, or else, so sure as there is a heaven, so sure would bribery have succeeded. However, the master at last hit on a cheaper plan: he ordered the steward to try bribery with the man himself; and, strange to say, the man who had defied all their threatenings, and defeated all their efforts to enlist him, and undergone the sufferings of the lash repeatedly, at once agreed with the steward, for twenty silver roubles, to get himself in perfect condition, and of his own accord enter the Russian army. He did so, and we heard no more of him. I should have stated that a silver rouble is 3s. 2d. English money. We

Digitized by Google

may now proceed to consider the army in general. So far as my knowledge goes, I consider them to be a mass of moving beings, without purpose, without an object in view, with no enterprise at all, and very little energy and activity about them. They seem to be a people so crushed in spirit, so trodden down by oppression, that the least spark of self-respect does not exist. My blood has been roused within me to see the great tall Russian soldier throw himself full length on the ground to kiss the feet of an officer's son, a mere stripling of sixteen, whom the soldier might almost have buried in his beard. It is "no go" for an Englishman to talk politics in Russia, or speak his mind on these matters. We had no alternative, therefore, but to turn away in disgust, with our hearts sickened, and silently digest what we had witnessed. I don't know, indeed, what the Russians may accomplish in battle, or in contending with the Turks, but certain I am they would never face the sprightly, active, energetic English soldiers. They certainly possess one good trait of a soldier to perfection: that is, they will do as they are bid. But they only do as they are bid through a blind, slavish fear: it is not to accomplish an object. It would not be because they long for victory, or dread a defeat; for I verily believe they are so dead to any object before them, that if an order was to come for the army to be marched to their antipodes for the purposes of war, or for any purpose, the soldiers themselves would be the last men to inquire where they were going. But, in another point of view, the Russian soldier beats all I ever saw or knew—that is, in passive endurance of hardship, privation, and suffering. What they undergo in this way would surely kill the English, or, I think, any other people. They will start off a march of one, two, or three hundred miles, or, as they call them, versts (a verst is about three-quarters of an English mile), with black bread and water for their staple food; anything else is a favour or a treat. Day after day they continue their march, seeking no shelter or lodgings for the night, caring not whether they are near or far from any town. Any where or every where is their barracks, the ground or the snow alike is their bed. When they have ceased marching for the day, they take up their quarters at the road-side, lay themselves down, roll round them their skin cloaks, (or what in their language is called the *shube*), with the wool

Digitized by Google

or fur inside, "head and tail," and "feet over head," one close by the other, packed together almost like herrings, and there sleep till morning. In travelling from Petersburg to Moscow, I rode by, or rather through hundreds fast asleep, as above described, all as still as death, with the bright moon shining upon them.

LETTER III.

In my last I gave a description of the Russian soldiery, as to how they sleep while on the march in the interior. As I have heard hints thrown out, by persons who read these letters, that this statement is not compatible with what they have heard and read of the severity of the Russian winter, "for (they say) all of them would have been dead in the morning." You will just allow me to say that the Russian winter bears no comparison with the English winter, neither does the English clothing bear any comparison with the Russian clothing. I should have given, and intend to give, under another head, in subsequent letters, full particulars of climate and clothing; and I may state that I brought home, and now have, a full dress of the Russian winter costume.

I wish now to describe their mode of taking a meal, or taking refreshment. When they arrive at a brook, well, or river, they sit down in rows, or in batches, each man taking out from his pack a lump of black bread, and making use of a little pot, or some such vessel, which they carry slung to their belt, and a bag of salt. This finishes their preparations; their table is set, their meal is cooked, and all is ready. Then they all stand up; and if a church be in sight, they all turn their faces towards it, and go through a number of motions and ceremonies. If no church be in sight, they turn their faces in the direction of the last church they saw, to perform these motions, and, I suppose, to repeat some prayer. This done, they sit down again, and with thankful hearts seem to enjoy their meal of water, black bread, and salt, as if it was a most delicious fare. And here I ought to remark, that I never saw an individual, either soldier or peasant, man or woman, boy or girl, begin or end a meal without going through these religious performances.

Now, as regards the pay of the army, I found on enquiry,

Digitized by Google

that it varied in different places: as at St. Petersburgh, and in the interior—as at one time on march, at another stationary; those in the interior being worse paid than those at Moscow or St. Petersburgh. There seem to be hordes of soldiers in all the villages in the interior of the country, who, I suppose, are off duty, and off pay and expense of the emperor, living and working on the land with their parents or relatives, but ready at any moment to be off when called upon. But as to those in the provinces who are really in the pay of the emperor, from all the inquiries I have made, I believe their pay does not average more than 1½d. or 2d. per day. They are the poorest, the shabbiest, the dirtiest objects I ever saw. But from such pay as this, of course their food, clothing, and accommodation, must be of the coarsest nature. Soldiering is universally acknowledged to be the worst "trade" in Russia; but, for all that, the army seems to be, and in fact really is, so devoted to the emperor, that they declare him to be the best man living, and speak of him as their great and good father. The remarks I have made in these letters allude chiefly to the soldiers in the interior. Those stationed about Moscow and Petersburgh are much different, and especially those about the palace. These are picked men, well dressed, well equipped, moderately disciplined, clean, tidy, tall, well-built men, and certainly of an imposing appearance. I have often attended the parade at the palace, and wondered if the emperor was made to believe that all the hordes of soldiers in the provinces were equal to those about him. Leaving out those at the ancient and modern capital, and some few at the largest villages, I may truly say that dirt, filth, degradation, neglect, and ill treatment, are the lot of the Russian army. Poor beings! What renders them more pitiable still, is that they don't know it. Any person who has been in Russia, can bear testimony to what I am about to say, namely, that in meeting a troop of Russian soldiers, they can smell them 50 yards before they get to them, and 100 or 150 yards after passing them. This remark as to filth and dirt will hold good for the Russian people generally; and I have heard many Englishmen seriously declare that they can smell Russia sixty, eighty, or an hundred miles before the vessel arrives there. The pay of the officers and those in command of the army is also very low; indeed, a respectable shopkeeper with

Digitized by Google

whom I traded and did business, and at whose house the officers were sometimes billeted for weeks at once, was the person whom I questioned on the subject. He told me their pay varied from nothing at all to eight or ten roubles per week. On referring to my memoranda, I find it to average, in English money, from twelve to twenty shillings per week. But he could give me no information about the salaries of those nearer the Emperor, and who stood highest in command. I remarked to this individual that those Russian officers must be better skilled in economy than we Englishmen; for such a salary bore little comparison to the splendour in which they lived, to the richness of their attire, and to the costliness of the equipages in which, with their wives and families, they ride about. He told me their salaries were wonderfully augmented by other means. He said they take jobs, where work is to be done, on the roads, in the forests, cutting wood, in towns and villages where any alterations are being made, and so forth. Those in command undertake to do the work, send out forty or fifty men to this job, forty or fifty to that job, and when it is completed, themselves receive the pay. There are also many other ways in which they make money, such as bribery in the disposing of petty offices, and other matters where they possess any influence. Bribery is so universally practised, that it is well known to be the beginning, the end, and the object of all persons, high and low, engaged in the transactions of business. I have often inquired of different parties, and in different parts of the country, if the Emperor was aware of all this corruption and public jobbing; the answer invariably was, "O yes; but if the Emperor puts down bribery, he would have to pay proper salaries."

LETTER IV.

In continuation of the subject of serving in the Russian army as officers and their pay, I wish to relate one more instance. An old veteran soldier retiring from the army, came to live at the place where I resided—the place, I suppose, of his birth, and where his relatives then lived, and their forefathers had lived before them. This man was somewhat respectably connected. He had entered the army when young, and had been away the greater part of his life; had

Digitized by Google

served in some of the warmest engagements with Poland and other places, and was now retiring as an officer in honour, in age, and grey hairs. I did not learn his starting point, or the progress of his promotion; I was witness, however, to his return. The dash and flourish he made amongst our poor villagers, the richness of his dress, the dazzle of his lace and regimentals, and the report of the large fortune he had amassed, entirely captivated the whole village, and for a time he was daily surrounded with admirers. As soon as the bustle of his reception was over, I began to be a constant observer of his motions, his living, his appearance, his company, and as far as I was able, his expenditure also. I soon began to suspect there was more glitter than gold. Whatever had been his opportunities to insure a fortune, I was soon convinced that the only one he had brought home was a young Polish lady as his mistress or second wife, in addition to his own aged and lawful wife, who was obliged to live in the same house, and to be an every-day witness to her own degradation, or rather her husband's degradation. I began to sift and sound about as to his allowance on his retirement; for I imagined the meanness of his abode, the falling off in his appearance, and many other little things I noticed, gave evident proof of crippled resources. But as a feeler, I remarked to an intimate friend of his, that his living in so common a hut, his boots not being blackened every morning, the metal about his regimentals not being regularly polished, the walking with his young mistress instead of riding as at first, and other such little things, were only fancy or "his way." He answered, with a shake of the head, he did not know, he could not understand it. Then, again, to another party who was much in his company, I observed, when Englishmen retired from either business or the army with large fortunes, they generally lived in large mansions, with men-servants and women-servants to wait upon them; but, said I, your friend prefers probably to keep his fortune in roubles, rather than build mansions and incur expenses. His answer was significant of his suspicions. At last, however, I believe I got the real truth from one of his relatives; which was, that whilst in the army he had lived up to his income, and that now he had retired upon a pension of nine roubles per month; in English money, say about seven shillings per week. This, then, is the career and end of a Russian field-officer.

Digitized by Google

Next, then, their opinions of themselves and their exploits in war. On this subject, as upon religion, they are all agreed, namely, that the emperors of Russia are the favourites of heaven, and that no earthly power can resist their arms. When in conversation with the peasants, as well as the soldiers, on this subject, I sometimes reminded them of the various unsuccessful attempts of Alexander and his army to stop Napoleon in his march to Moscow, and then asked if he did not resist their arms. But they had a most wonderful method of explaining everything in their favour. They told me those attempts were made up between God and Alexander only to entice Napoleon on to utter destruction; and, as the conclusion of the campaign agreed with the premises of their argument, it was vain to offer any reply. I merely remarked that I thought the destruction of the French was as much to be attributed to the severity of their winter as to the valour of their troops; but I soon found they prided themselves as much upon this point as if they had gained the whole victory man to man, in a pitched contest; for, said they, the army, the church, and the emperor prayed to God to begin the winter sooner, in order to overthrow the enemy, and he did so; and if it had been summer, no matter—they could have prevailed with God to turn it to winter! When any misfortune or disaster does happen to them, individually or collectively, such is their unbounded faith in their emperor, in their pastors, and in their religion, that they ascribe it to the omission or neglect of some religious duty, which, on a little reflection or study, they can always clearly recollect.

LETTER V.

While writing on this head, I think it will be the most proper here to give the result of my inquiries respecting Russian campaigning, and to show the stratagems made use of by the Russian army to harass, starve, and overthrow the French. I have said in a former letter that the Russian army is unable to meet or contend with the English on a field of battle. This statement will hold good with the French also. The more I inquired into the matter, the more I was convinced that the Russians could not fight the French. I had excellent opportunity of making inquiry on this subject. We

Digitized by Google

had two or three old men on our premises who were present in the continental war, followed the rear of the French, and several times took an active part in the matter. Those two had not been soldiers; they were villagers. But I also paid visits to the battle-ground of Borodino; and, in order to ascertain the real truth and take correct notes, I took with me our bookkeeper as assistant, and two old soldiers who were honoured with the occupancy of a small hut on the field of battle—which hut they have lived in ever since the conclusion of the campaign. With those two living witnesses then for our guide, we went round the field, and step by step I examined the ground; was shown the spot where such a body of French took up their position; and where another and another with their generals named and so on, did the same. We then had pointed out the corresponding parts of the Russian army, with which those named of the French had to contend; for, be it remembered, this was something like a pitched battle. At all events, it was where the Russians collected their forces and waited the coming up of Napoleon, determined, I suppose, that he should approach no nearer to Moscow. I do not profess to be a judge in these matters, but certainly, while on the spot, I thought the part of the country and the ground occupied by the Russians for either fight or retreat was evidently well selected, but particularly in case of retreat. The woods and forests before which they had taken up their positions afforded them immense advantages of escape; and not of escape only, but as our guides informed us (I ought to have stated that our guides were regulars at the time of the battle, and took part in the campaign from first to last), those woods answered as a sort of ambush, in and behind which numbers of infantry and cavalry were posted, who, as the battle proceeded, were called out to this or to that part of the field where necessity demanded their presence. We were then shown the place of Napoleon's head quarters, and the small eminence on which he stood to view the scene of slaughter. As a proof of the advantage of those forests in favouring their retreat, I may state, that although so completely routed by the French, with the shelter of those woods and a knowledge of the roads and country, they were enabled again to rally their broken forces within twelve miles, at a rather large village called Mazhoisk, and again offer some

Digitized by Google

warm resistance to the further progress of the enemy. Just before reaching the town of Mazhoisk, the road is down a steep hill, then up another equally as steep, into the town. When the French had got fairly into the valley, the Russians on a sudden appeared at the top, infantry and artillery, did much havoc, and then again fled. This town Napoleon burnt to the ground, house by house, and left not one standing. It is now rebuilt in more modern style, and the summit of the hill, the very spot from which lead was poured upon the French, is now crowned with a splendid church, in remembrance of the event. This road from the battle-field of Borodino to Mazhoisk, I have also travelled, foot by foot, with great interest; and I attended divine service at the church on the summit, which, as near as I can think, is about one hundred versts from Moscow. Now, after showing these advantages which the Russians possessed, namely, a knowledge of the country, the roads, the people, and last, but not least, being at home, I think it proves that the army of Alexander, at all events, was not able to contend with the army of Napoleon. Whether the army of Alexander II. will be able to contend with those of Napoleon III. and Victoria combined is now being tried. I suppose he is sanguine on the subject; as I learn by a private letter from Moscow, that a continual stream of soldiers is marching from the interior, *viâ* Moscow, to the seat of war. This letter states that the Emperor has two millions of an army. But to return. The battle-field of Borodino is now a plain, on which is cultivated the black bread (grain) of the Russians, pasture and meadow land; that part of the country is rather in a sloping direction, with a sort of ravine at its termination. The two soldiers (our guides) occupy a solitary hut, close to the grave in which the thousands of dead sleep. Upon this grave a very high and splendid monument is now built, with full particulars of the battle sculptured on the stone. There is also a Greek monastery on the battle ground, and a pretty large village of huts hard by.

LETTER VI.

Not far from the field of Borodino is a fine, large, and splendid seat, or mansion, belonging to the Emperor, built

Digitized by Google

since the battle, purposely to accommodate himself, family, and retinue when visiting the field of battle. This he has always done at certain periods; may be once in two years, sometimes every summer, or oftener. One visit he made to this seat while I was in the interior. It is kept clean and in order by a number of his male and female slaves, who continually reside on the spot for the purpose, with one man as *smatereetle* (foreman) over them. Our Russian book-keeper told me the rooms inside were hung round with engravings and pictures of the richest kind. I felt an inclination, therefore, to see through them; but, on mentioning this to the book-keeper, he told me there would be no chance at all of that, not even the shadow of a prospect, as none were ever admitted without a note from some superior personage. But I had learned bribery too well, and knew the influence of Russian roubles too well to be deterred. I told our clerk, then, to conduct me to this *smatereetle*, and, if he dare not ask for admittance, I would. I was therefore introduced to him, and after bowing, lifting the hat, and other ceremonies, I told him I was an Englishman, and a stranger in this part of the world, and felt a great inclination to be conducted through this splendid seat of the Emperor. He lifted up his hands and exclaimed "*Nilzyah, nilzyah, nilzyah,*" (impossible, impossible, impossible); but perfectly regardless of those expressions, and nothing daunted so long as I had Russian money in my pocket, I stepped close up to his side, as if to examine the mansion more closely, and unobserved slipped a silver rouble into his hand; and then, to relieve him from the predicament in which this had put him, after he had so flatly denied us admittance (for I knew that all that was then wanting was a pretext), I turned round to him and said, "Suppose I give you a ticket with my name on, and if the Emperor or other person should find fault afterwards, you can send for me." "Oh," said he, "on those conditions I will conduct you through every part of the building." I therefore with black-lead, on a slip of paper, wrote, in the Russian language, my own name, and was immediately inside the mansion. I found a great many portraits of the different members of the imperial family, and the battle of Borodino in its different stages. The rooms, the furniture, the landings of the staircase, and the whole interior of the building were worthy of an emperor.

Digitized by Google

But the paintings and the portraits were not what I expected to find them. After examining the interior of the mansion, we were shown a large long dining room, a building of itself close to the mansion. It is built in the form of a shed, and will dine the imperial family with all their attendants, suits and retinue, at once; such a dining room I never before saw. A table runs down the middle of the whole length, which surely must be the longest table in the whole world. The number of chairs I could not ascertain, but at the time I thought them as many as I had seen in all my life before, put together. Tables and chairs form all the furniture this most extensive room possesses. While inside it, I could not help thinking what a fine weaving shop it would make. To make an end of our visit to Borodino, we then returned to the hut occupied by the two old soldiers, our guides. I told them I had one more favor to ask, and that was, could they make me a cup of tea, for I wanted to say to my countrymen that I had taken tea on the battle-field of Borodino, with two old Russian campaigners. "Oh," said they, "we always keep kroozhka, chi, Bealy-cleab, and masla, (pots, tea, white bread, and butter) for strangers," and added that they would do their best for me; but as to themselves, they must be excused, for all those good things were only for better sort of people. Besides, they never used, nor were they worthy, to sit down with "barons and foreigners." But I told them I was only a poor working man from England; and that, although they were slaves and I a free man, I considered they were more worthy than myself; and if they would not consent to take tea with me, I should feel myself very much slighted, and it was only on these conditions that I would allow the preparations to be proceeded with. It would be too lengthy to follow out all particulars, but certainly I was amused and much delighted in noticing the progress and preparation of tea, and enjoyed much pleasure in sitting down with those two old warriors to partake of the same. When tea was over, and I had rewarded them pretty liberally, I said I had still another favor to ask, and that was, to take with me some little relic or other of the battle of Borodino. They soon placed before me old guns, swords, shoes, caps, balls, &c., &c., from which to choose as I liked; but as I had often heard of the old dodge of manufactured buttons, guns, bullets, swords, bucklers, and horse-

Digitized by Google

shoes, for the purpose of imposing upon the visitors at the field of Waterloo, I begged to be excused, and told them I should prefer visiting the spot where all those things had been found, and, if possible, be an eye-witness to the finding of such things as I should take home. To this they agreed; and we had not searched long before we found various pieces of old metal and other things, the former use of which I could not imagine. We selected, however, a few bullets of different sizes, about which I thought there could be no mistake, which I brought home, and still have in my possession. I also plucked a wild flower or two from the grave into which the thousands of dead were thrown, the seeds of which I have planted, and intend to cultivate as a relic of the Russian campaign.

As I promised to state some of the means and stratagems used by the Russian army and the peasants, to starve, harass, and conquer the French, I will do so in my next, just as I had it from the lips of both villagers and old soldiers who were engaged in the war.

LETTER VII.

As I promised, I will now state a few things, as I find them in my notes, concerning that very memorable affair, the Russian campaign; and, although I have said in a previous letter, that I do not think the Russians able to cope with either the English or French in battle, I will now state what is not likely to be credited by the public in general. At least, if we may judge from the public prints, the spirit of the *Times*, predictions of individuals who stand pretty high in the estimation of our countrymen, we must believe that no nation could be so easily conquered as the Russians; and, according to one prophet, whose opinion I have read, Russia, with its emperor and its absolute and despotic government, will be very soon known only as a thing that was. With all due deference to other people and their opinions, I would just remark, that I suspect there is a great difference between driving back the Russian army from the banks of the Danube into their own country again, and conquering Russia. In the possibility and probability of the former, I certainly believe; but in the possibility of the latter I do not believe. That is, if by conquering Russia we are to understand that

Digitized by Google

hostile armies shall enter those vast regions, to hunt down its emperor, army, and its government, to a thing that once was. Neither the English nor the French army, nor any other army in the world (according to my humble opinion) could conquer the Russians in their own country, unless, indeed, they entered the country immediately the snow went, and what they had to do, did it quickly, and got out again before the snow was upon them. But even then, the vastness of the country, and the shortness of the summer, would certainly render the experiment doubtful.

I do not think that any other people or nation possess such facilities, or are naturally so well prepared for annoying, harassing, and starving a hostile army, as they are—as in the case of Napoleon and his army. I questioned two old men who lived on the premises where I was employed, and who assisted in harassing the French. The Russians soon knew when the provisions of the French were failing, by the exertions they made in scouring the country for food and forage. The plan the Russians adopted was this:—They appointed three different parties of horsemen always to precede the French army several miles; sometimes ten, twenty, fifteen, or five, as circumstances required. One party was right in front of the French; a second also ahead, but to the left; the third the same, only to the right. Each party had what they called a flying post, which kept up a regular communication between the three. Another flying post was also stationed between those parties and the French. The main body of the Russians was sometimes in flank, sometimes in the rear, as circumstances directed. The duty of those flying posts was to travel as near as they safely could to the French, and to continually convey information to the advanced parties, as to what route the French were likely to take. This being ascertained, they galloped forward, and knowing well where and how the villages lay, they gave notice to the inhabitants to quit or rather to move aside, while the enemy passed by. At the same time they were ordered to collect all their cattle, yoke up their horses to their sledges, load all the grain and food they possibly could, and take it along with them. What they could not take they were to bury, hide, or destroy. In this position, the French army had to traverse those vast regions. Every village at which they arrived was merely a

Digitized by Google

number of empty huts, which were very near of the same value laid in ruins as left standing. Scouring the country to the right and left was all the same. Those advanced parties had preceded them, and all was desolation. Napoleon, enraged at finding village after village deserted, neither food, forage, nor living soul to be met with—ordered those advanced parties, those forerunners of desolation and death, to be overtaken and broken at all hazards. This he succeeded in doing, and established another advanced party of his own; but no sooner was this done than the Russians had another party again still in advance of Napoleon's; and again, as the French masses moved along, were they deprived of everything that could be made available for their succour. Soon after quitting Moscow the winter was about their ears, and the snow was upon them. This country, or rather the face of the country, which had hitherto, in appearance, resembled other countries, was now suddenly turned into one solid mass of ice and snow. How, then, was any army retreating in and travelling an enemy's country, to act, preceded by three different parties, to the right, left, and in the front, who swept the country of all succour for fifty miles on every side; now flanked, now followed, now surprised, now deluded, by those ever present, ever troublesome Cossacks, who, always fighting, never fought; ever fleeting, never fled? Day after day they marched in this condition, vainly casting their eyes around for some place of succour; but as far as the eye could reach, east, west, north, and south, nothing to be seen but snow and ice—snow and ice. My informants told me that every night they bivouacked by the watch fires, the next morning they left hundreds dead and hundreds dying. After the French had started again on march in the morning, the place of bivouac was eagerly visited by the Russians, to dispatch those who were unable to follow any further. One of these old men told me he found hundreds burnt to death, who, he said, had been so benumbed with cold, that they had been unconscious of their bodies burning. Hundreds more he found frozen to death, limbs and body as stiff as the gun which was found clasped in their arms. Others, he said, were still living who were so frost bitten, that the whole of their flesh was in a rank state of mortification, the sight and stench being intolerable. This old man told me that when he was sick and

Digitized by Google

tired with stabbing, shooting, and dashing out the brains of those who were unable to follow, he commenced the more humane (?) method of stripping them, and leaving them to perish naked. This, he knew, would be as certain death as shooting. In such a country, then, it is easy to imagine that all that is needed to conquer an hostile army, is to "let them alone," and they will most assuredly find their grave. And although this present war with Russia is not to be of the same description, still, when I see and hear of the English army leaving their shores amid the cheers of their countrymen, I cannot but feel on the subject, and look back on those flat plains of ice and snow, under which the bones of so many thousands of the French still lie mouldering, and upon whose graves I have often stood in sadness, reflecting on the delusion of this military glory.

LETTER VIII.

I will now further explain how and why the Russians have it in their power, more than any other nation, to defeat an invading army,—that of England, for instance. The word invasion, in the ears of English people, has quite a different sound, and brings with it quite different notions, to what it would with the Russians. Speak of an enemy's army entering, invading, or overrunning England, and at once you have the picture of the breaking up of long-established commerce, shops, manufactories, trades, and establishments of every description —all these at once suspended; property in the shape of buildings, &c., to the amount of thousands, even in every village, burned and levelled to the ground. Every man here has something to protect—something which he cannot, must not, will not abandon—something that he will stand by with his life. The hopes, the future prospects, and the fortunes of every individual depend upon the preservation and continuance of things as they are. The next week's food of our thousands of the working population, depends upon their next week's labour. The people would require and would have food,—in short, an invasion of England would be nothing less than a breaking up of society, law, and order. Not so with the Russians. Tell them they are about to be invaded, and they will take it quite easy. All they have consists of

Digitized by Google

grain and vegetables, with hay for their cattle. Only give but a few hours' notice to any village, and every horse and every cow will be yoked to a sledge loaded with their winter's food and provisions, ready to start a journey of 200, 300, or 400 miles, driving their sheep, pigs, and other stock before them. Beds, bedding, furniture, and household utensils, are things they never knew, or seem to want to know, anything about. (Of course what I say alludes to Russia as it is in the interior, Russia in general, leaving out Moscow, St. Petersburgh, and some of the largest towns.) Now I say that a general flitting of the Russian villages could be done with a very little inconvenience and trouble, very little loss to any party concerned, and as little would any of them care about it; but would either go contented, or stop contented, as the *stanavoy* (head magistrate of the district) ordered. The only thing of value they would leave behind would be the land, and this no enemy could take with him. Their wood huts might be destroyed and burnt to the ground; but this is of little consequence: timber is plentiful, and when the time of returning arrived, every man, or rather family, would take up their own site, go with their axes to the nearest forest, and cut down as much wood as was needed; and, as beauty, pride, taste, or ornament is out of the question, each family would rebuild their own huts and sheds in so short a time that it would surprise an Englishman; and the first spring would make the village what it had ever been—would see the meadows loaded with hay, the fields waving with corn, the hemp, the lin, as also potatoes, peas, and fruit ready to be gathered in. The same villagers would be there with their cows, sheep, and all their cattle as usual; every family occupying the same spot, cultivating the same land, and everything going on as if they had not been disturbed for the last hundred years. Although they are serfs, every family farms, and very nearly grows or makes all it needs. This renders a currency, or money circulation, almost unnecessary. Their wants are few—their luxuries less—and all they have been accustomed to, their own land has provided, or rather produced.

Every family cultivates as much land as will stock it for the winter in grain, for black bread; cabbages, potatoes, peas, and other vegetable produce, also hay for the cattle. No man, as far as my knowledge went, lived by a trade; for all men

Digitized by Google

not living in the immediate vicinity of a town, are brought up to do everything for themselves: to build their own houses, to make their own carts and farming implements, their own boots, cloaks, and other clothes, to kill their own flesh meat; in short, everything is done by themselves. Their land, then, brings them food; their sheep skins furnish them with winter cloaks; the bark of trees is made available for boots; the long grass which grows in the swamps and at the river edges, is rudely formed into a sort of stockings, after it has been dried; the lin is cultivated for their shirting and summer clothing; and, when the country is one mass of snow and out-door work impossible, they remain inside, spinning this lin on one spindle, on a machine of their own making, and weaving it into cloth (several specimens of which I have in my possession) in a loom of their own making. I think no civilised people can be more self-supporting than are the Russians in general. Certainly some parts depend much upon the cultivation of grain for exportation; but in many parts that I have visited, at some distance from the high roads, so little do they know or depend upon trade or traffic, that not an individual could be found in the whole village who knew the value of their own money. From curiosity I have many times visited the villages to purchase chickens, ducks, and different sorts of fowls, in payment for which I have presented a Russian piece of silver coin, which I knew was nearly twice their value, and which coin was taken from hut to hut to be examined; but all in vain, not a man or woman in the whole village could be found to pronounce its value; and, consequently, I had to deliver back the fowl and pocket my coin again. I have been thus particular in describing the internal state and condition of Russia, as thinking how very little loss would accrue to the Russians, comparatively speaking, by being invaded, and how little for the time being could be gained by those invading them.

LETTER IX.

I believe I have not in any previous letter given a description of the Russian people, compared with the English as to size, strength, capability, and other respects. I therefore propose now to give the result of my observations on this

Digitized by Google

subject; after which, it may not be amiss to say a few words concerning the climate.

What I shall say of the Russians in this respect, will not agree exactly with the opinion of an individual, whose statement lately appeared in "Cassell's Family Paper." This I cannot help. It may be that the individual referred to, may have had greater and more abundant opportunities of seeing and knowing the Russians in general; his travels in Russia, and consequently his knowledge, are probably far more extensive than mine. I will, therefore, only vouch for the truth of what I assert, as far as regards that part of Russia through which I travelled, and in that part of the country where I resided, viz., in the government of Moscow, Old Tartary, and about the borders of Tartary Proper. In "Cassell's Paper," it is stated that the Russians are in general tall, robust, and of great strength of limb. This really does not agree with what I saw and experienced amongst them. As regards their height, I have heard other Englishmen remark, when I was in Russia, that on an average they considered the English to be considerably taller than the Russians. As regards their being robust, I must say that we never found them to be men of either vigour, activity, courage, or resolution. Then as to strength of limb, this is sadly at variance with all my experience and observation. If they do possess superior strength to the English, they are exceeding careful not to put it forth. I am almost sure that any Englishman who has worked with and amongst them, will attest the truth of this. One instance out of hundreds, I may just relate, as it seems to be to the point. An Englishman, now living at Bolton, but who for some time was working at the firm where I was employed, wanted a rather heavy pedestal removing from one part of the premises to another. He ordered two of the Russians to do this; they tried, but said it was *nilzya* (impossible). They fetched other two and tried again, but it was still *nilzya;* they could not even move or stir it from the ground. They were about to fetch other two, when this Englishman, out of all patience, and John-bull like, shoved them sideways, and in the moment of ill humour, laid hold of the casting, and himself carried it to its place, to the consternation and confusion of the four Russians, pettishly exclaiming he did not need all the folks in

Digitized by Google

the country to be fetched to carry a small casting. True, it was more a two than a one man's lift. In "Cassell's Paper," it is stated that a thin person is seldom to be met with. It was not so about us; for the ague at one time of the year is very prevalent, and numbers of the people are attacked with it; and, rather strange to say, I knew cases where the same persons, for seven years successively, and at the same season of the year, had invariably been afflicted with this dreadful epidemic, which is known, I believe, throughout Russia by the name of *lickeraddky;* and as many people are attacked by it, you will observe many of them to be of a weakly, thin, feeble appearance, and of sallow, sickly, pale and unhealthy complexion. But I cannot say for certain whether this epidemic prevails in all parts of Russia. "Deformity," he says, "is rarely seen;" and this exactly agrees with my observations. While I was in Russia, we English (who had been brought up in Lancashire) often remarked how very seldom we saw a crooked or deformed person, and offered our different opinions to each other as to why it was so. He also says: "The great plains of snow affect the sight." This, too, is just as I have it in my notes; only I don't know whether or not it affects their sight lastingly, or whether it has a general weakening tendency, so as to cause this important faculty to fail them at an earlier period in life than other nations; but I have often seen persons who, for a short time, had been accustomed to being "out doors," who, when they came to the mill again, could neither see their work, the machinery, the people about them, nor their way out again, but had to be led home by others; but the next day, or perhaps in two days, they returned to their work all right. This they call being "snow blind." In the publication alluded to, it is stated they are capable of enduring great privation. This I have also shown to be the case in a previous letter.

The snow generally begins to fall in October; the last remains of which disappear in May — perhaps in April. Generally speaking, it is fine settled weather in Russia. Twice in the year it is very bad, namely, at the fall of the snow, and again at its melting; or, as it is called, "the break up." After it has fairly begun to snow, it will do so for perhaps three weeks together, every day more or less; and, as the people know its time of falling, they take care always to have

Digitized by Google

everything in readiness. Whatever they have to do on the land is by this time completed. Their huts at this period undergo an examination; and all crevices and faulty places in the roof, foundation, about the windows and other places, are now well stuffed with platted straw. The snow then falls upon it to a considerable thickness, and the frost soon turns it, as it were, into a regular coating of airtight ice, and thus for the winter they are surprisingly sheltered from the weather and the cold. I have many times, even in the midst of winter, stepped into a Russian hut and found it uncomfortably hot. After the snow has fallen, and the rivers and the country are, as it were, turned into ice, it is then generally fine settled weather, and although so extremely cold, there is a fine, clear, bright blue sky, day after day, for weeks and months together, without interruption, and every day for a few hours the sun shining as bright as in midsummer. So seldom is a clouded sky seen, that when it is so, the English point it out to each other, and call out "Old England, old England." At this part of the year I am speaking of, I have noted five months together and never a drop of rain, or even a damp atmosphere, but continually bright, clear, and dreadfully cold. And what seemed to me very strange was, that although the sun, for a short time every day, shone so brightly, it appeared to have no effect whatever on the ice and snow.

LETTER X.

As I said in my last, the bright rays of the sun all winter long have no effect on the ice and snows of Russia. In April, however, they have to yield to its influence; and at this time, although perhaps as yet there has been no rain, the flat plains become an immense lake. The brooks overflow, and the roads are rendered impassable by this sudden melting of the snow, and the moving waters finding their way to the rivers. This is (to an Englishman) another curious sight, to see the fields, the valleys, the swamps, and the brooks running bank full of water, without any rain, and in the finest of weather. I must not be understood to say there is no rain about this period of the year, for at this time there is sure to be much and heavy rain; only I mean to say this might be the case (as I have seen it) before any rain has fallen. It may be,

Digitized by Google

however, that the rain is falling at the same time that the snow and ice are melting, as was the case last "break up;" and then the country is regularly inundated. All travelling in the interior, and, indeed, everything else about where we resided, was at a dead stand. The works at which I was employed were stopped for nearly a week, four days of which the mill was only approachable by boats. In the streets of St. Petersburg, also, I understand, boats were made use of; but I suppose such floods had not been known for a great number of years. When the ice on the river breaks up, it is a sight worth seeing; it is awfully grand to stand on some little eminence, to see and hear the contending masses of ice as they force themselves down the stream, which is all but choked up with immense quantities—clashing, crashing, plunging as far down and as far up the river as the eye can reach. All is in terrible commotion and tumult; here some large mass, coming in contact with others, will rear itself perpendicular in the river; and there, high above all the rest, will ride along, until either meeting with, or overtaken by some still more stupendous mass, it is shattered into a thousand atoms, and "like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaves not a wreck behind." Here and there the conflicting masses will throw out, far away from the main river, huge rocks of ice, which will there remain on the banks long after the flood and ice have gone by; but, by the influence of the sun, will gradually get less and less, until they finally disappear. I have stood to behold the scene in the stillness of night; I have taken my stand on the banks of the river, and for hours listened to the midnight contest of those ponderous pieces of ice. Day after day, night after night, they roll down the river in seemingly unlimited quantities. The break-up begins much more gradually than it ends. In the beginning there is many a loud crack, many a groan, many a rumble, and many a strain, before the ice can get into motion; but the end is very sudden. The main body of the ice keeps together; no straggling pieces coming after the rest have gone by. If the ice at the edge of the river is not dissolved just when the main river is, there is such a choking up of the way, that the onward progress of the ice is much retarded, and consequently the after-pieces are soon with the main body, and so remain. Last break-up I saw the finishing up, or passing of the last

Digitized by Google

ice; and for a considerable distance down the river followed its rear. All below was commotion; all above was the clear, still, sweeping river; and altogether very forcibly, in everything but speed, reminded me of the passing of a railway train —so abrupt is the termination of the break-up. I suppose, now, our gallant Napier will soon be in a position for witnessing a break-up of the ice. Really, as I sailed past and under the guns of Cronstadt, I thought that neither a Nelson, a Napier, nor any other man in his senses, would ever attempt to take it. But as I am no judge in these matters, of course what I say or think on this point goes for nothing. But every ordinary or common person who has seen those terrible fortifications must be at a loss how or by what means they can be taken. As I had often read the exploits and achievements of our naval hero, Nelson, I took delight in examining Copenhagen, Elsinore, and other places rendered notable by that extraordinary man. But Cronstadt! the very thought of taking Cronstadt is literally frightful. If the English or French were in possession of that place, surely no power on earth could take it from them. But to return again into the interior: I say the sudden disappearance of the ice, and the all at once smooth, clear surface of the flood, seem to be an indispensable providence; for, as there are no coals in Russia, and the whole of Moscow has to be supplied for the year with fire-wood, and this from the interior, it is just now or never that this can be done. As soon as the rain begins to descend, or the sun begins to exert an influence on the snow, the river sides are literally alive, for scores of miles, with peasants, axe in hand, preparing their rafts of trees cleared of their branches, ready, the moment the ice has gone by, to be launched on the flood. Just about this time, when the roads, by the rains and melting of the snow, are rendered bad and impassable, just then is provided, on the surface of the flood, a far better, quicker, and much more economical mode of transit from the interior to Moscow; but, as the flood runs high only for a short time, it is essential that all parties be in readiness to launch their rafts immediately the ice has gone by. This is done at all points and parts of the river, for scores of miles; and now, when all is fairly launched and off, the river is almost as much crowded with people and fire-wood, as it was the day before with broken fragments of ice.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XI.

The Russian rafts for floating down a river are formed as follows:—First, they take the bare trunk of four straight (indeed in all their large forests you will seldom see any crooked) trees, placed so as to form a frame nearly square, but rather broader at the hinder than the fore part. At the four corners they are jointed together firmly. A number (25, 30, or 35,) of these frames are then fastened together by young pliant boughs or branches; and, as the fore part of every frame is narrower than the hinder part of that preceding it, the whole raft is thus admirably adapted for floating through the bushes, willows, and other impediments which grow about the banks and edges of the river. And as the leading part of every frame is sheltered behind the hinder or broader part of the one before it, it will slide over the banks of the river (with which the rafts often come in contact) for a considerable distance without any damage, that is, providing the leading frame of the raft be kept in the stream. Upon these frames is laid the timber, lengthwise, one, two, or three deep, as they think proper. After the frames are loaded, they will construct their huts (in which to sleep, eat, and cook), generally in a triangular form, with an opening towards the hinder end of the raft. The great number of frames thus fastened together make the raft exceedingly difficult to manage, from its immense length, and in some places the sharp turns of the river. The main point and object is to keep the first portion of the raft in the middle of the stream, and the remaining portion will ride through and over almost any obstacles. The way they effect this point is by placing six steersmen (or women and men promiscuously) at the front of the first frame; and each has a strong, long, fixed oar, of great power and leverage. There are also one or two on the last frame to regulate and govern the tail. When they come in sight of a sharp turn in the river, or any other place of danger, signal is given, and immediately all persons on the raft—men with uncovered heads, women with bended bodies—are in the act of performing their religious devotions and ceremonies. When they come near to the turn, the steersmen begin to work their oars with all their might, in a contrary direction to the tendency of the stream, so as to keep the leading part of the raft as much as possible in the middle of the river. If they succeed in this,

Digitized by Google

and run safe by, clear of any accident, they attribute it to the due and timely performance of those religious duties just mentioned; but if they fail in this, and the raft runs aground, as I have several times seen it, frame over frame, raft upon raft, till it is torn limb from limb, some portions left on the banks, and other portions floating loose and in all directions down the river, then they attribute it to the omission of this duty at some point of the river above, where it ought to have been attended to, or else to the neglect of this duty at some point of the river last year, the punishment of which was sure sooner or later to overtake them. After some altercation amongst them as to what sin this catastrophe is attributable, they set about to reconstruct their raft, with the determination to be more watchful, and perform more punctually what their church enjoins in future. The faith of the Greek church is astonishingly applicable to all cases and all circumstances. If they can manage to fit up their raft again ready before the water gets too low, they at once put in and steer off once more for Moscow; if not, the timber is piled up at a proper distance, from the edge of the river, and there remains till the following year. No person could be made to believe the quantity of wood that passes down this river * unless he saw it for himself, and any person would wonder how it could ever be all burnt or used. But there are large cotton and other manufactories in and around Moscow which consume incredible quantities. When the people from the interior have sold their timber at Moscow, they have then to perform the journey back on foot. This they do in caravans or lots together. Perhaps, when the fuel market is over at Moscow, they will start for home in lots of 300, 400, or 500 men and women together, travelling day and night, only resting when they are tired, eating when they are hungry, and sleeping when drowsy. The company soon begin to diminish, by batches breaking off from the high road and taking the nearest way across the country to their own homes, until finally the last batch are lodged in their own huts. Now, these people who once in the year visit the big town Moscow, or as the Russians call it, "the holy city of God," are the lights of the interior; these are they who can, in some measure, understand the value of their own money—silver roubles and

* The river Moskva, but how far into the interior it bears this name I do not know.

Digitized by Google

copper roubles, gold pieces, platina pieces, kopeaks, and paper money. The use of wood instead of coal is much more pleasant and convenient than I expected to find it. The timber is split and cut into short pieces, the length of which is varied according to the purposes for which they are intended: cottage fuel in pieces of twelve to eighteen inches long, factory fuel in pieces much longer and thicker. The cottages, too, intended for the Englishr at the different cotton manufactories with which I was acquainted, are made very convenient and comfortable, and as much as possible to imitate and meet the taste of the English. The fireplace, or, as they call it, the "peach," is in one corner of the house, from which place the heat is carried entirely round the rooms in the bottom part of the house, by flues constructed with a flat top, so that it will answer the purpose of a shelf, table, or bedstead for the servants; in other houses they prefer to have the heat carried straight up in large pipes, and have the fireplaces in various parts of the house: by either of which plans, you can have the rooms at summer heat, if you please, all the winter through; and as the fuel is plentiful and cheap, the atmosphere inside the house is often as extremely hot as it is cold at the outside. Many parties have expressed their surprise to me about wood being substituted for coal, and as to how the former could be adapted to all purposes, but so it is.

LETTER XII.

It is often asked how the Russians manage to keep up the required heat in their cotton and other manufactories in that cold climate during the winter season. In the first place, every mill is provided with a double set of windows, the inmost of which is put in at the approach, and taken out again at the end of winter. This, I dare say, will be thought to be a rather troublesome affair, by people who have not witnessed it; but it is not so. It gives far less trouble, and is done in much less time than one would imagine. The window frames at first are made to fit the wall, and fill the place for which they are intended. The place and frame can then both be numbered, so that every year the same frame will be brought to the same place, and will fit well without loss of time or trouble. In November, two men bring and put up these in-

Digitized by Google

side windows. Another follows to examine the sides and edges, and if there be any bad place or aperture likely to admit the cold, he has a thin, broad-edged tool and hammer, and gently stuffs the place with cotton waste, and then the windows are complete for the winter. I know it will not be credited generally when I say, that for weeks together, in the depth of winter, we have run our works without even a breath of steam being sent through the rooms, except for a few hours at the close of each Sunday. Another thing that tends to keep up the heat of the rooms is this—in winter the days are very short, and the mills run night and day, so that the gas-lights are out but a very few hours in the twenty-four. Then again, the continual heat arising from the friction of the straps, and the running of the machinery, as also from the mill being occupied day and night by the people, must all tend to the same end. At our works, however, we seldom sent the steam through the mill except after each holiday; and although the cold outside was so severe that all the hands had to come and return from work in skin clothing, from head to foot; we were always sufficiently warm inside the mill. You may have some idea of the climate of Russia when I tell you, that the front of my own cloak, with which my breath had come in contact, was covered with solid ice in a few minutes' walk. I have measured the ice on the river, and have found it a yard and a-half thick; and have seen portions come down the river, at the time of the break up, much thicker than that. I have taken the trouble to melt the ice on a pane of glass in my window, and have found it 1¼ inch thick. (Bad country this, by the bye, for window peepers). It is very common to see the Russians, who never shave, with icicles hanging to their beards, and others with disfigured faces, which at some time have been frost-bitten. Some are so bad in this respect, that their faces scarcely present the human appearance. The way to prevent this is, when any part of the body or face is set upon by the frost, to commence rubbing it with snow, and continue the operation until the frost is driven out again by the friction; so say the Russians. I have seen this performed; one man with a limb bare, and two others rubbing it with snow, with all their might. It sometimes happens, too, that persons are frozen to death. An Englishman with whom I was acquainted while in Russia,

Digitized by Google

had a very narrow escape. He had a journey to make in the winter, and being the first winter he had resided in that country, was not sufficiently provided with the Russian clothing; and having the idea that nothing more than two great thick pilot overcoats would be needed, started off with his English clothing. He was visiting another Englishman some seventy versts off, and when he arrived at his destination, it was thought he was dead. The driver and others had to carry him from the sledge into the house. He had lost all consciousness long before he arrived at his friend's house. He told me the sensation he felt was very curious. At the beginning he was sensible the cold was taking great hold of him; he felt stiff, starved, and benumbed; he felt he was losing the use of his limbs, and became alarmed; and, as the horses galloped, he set his arms and legs in motion to regain their proper use. The uncomfortableness first experienced now began to get less and less; the inclination to save himself also got less; the alarm he first felt died away, and he sank down, as he thought, into a secure but indescribable sort of sleep, from which, had the journey lasted another hour, he would never have awoke.

Should any person, that intends going to Russia, see these letters, I can tell him that it is all folly to lay in a stock of thick warm winter clothing in England. It is money thrown away. Nothing but skins with the wool, fur, or hair inside, will resist the cold, or answer the purpose. The Russian "shube" will have to be purchased after all; but there is every variety and price, from the baron's to the peasant's, beginning at 10s., and going up in value to £40. I mean these remarks to include both male and female clothing. These cloaks are made from the skins of many different animals, all of which are caught in the winter season, for then they seem to have double the thickness of fur or hair. The sheep-skin, however, is the cheapest, and consequently forms the common "shube" of the Russian peasant.

LETTER XIII.

The Shube, of which I spoke in my last, is one of the greatest comforts the country of Russia affords, as there is no person—except newly-arrived foreigners—however poor, with-

Digitized by Google

out one of these requisites. They are made in two or three different sorts, according to the purpose for which they are intended. If it be for the peasant, and in which he will have to work, and attend to the horses, cows, and stock, and other work about the house and farm, it is made of lighter skins, without cape, and reaching only to the calf of the legs; if for sledge travelling, it is made of thick heavy skins, the hair or wool of which is always turned inside, with a large double cape to fall over the shoulders or turn up far above the head, and tie or hook in front at two or three different places, from the neck upwards. The shubes of the better class are invariably covered with cloth outside, so that when the cape is put up nothing like skin is discernible, unless it be just round the top of the cape, and at the bottom of the cloak. Those travelling cloaks reach down to the heels, and are of such enormous weight that many a baron is unable to lift his own travelling cloak; in which case, after he has got into the sledge, he is assisted by two men to put on the cloak, and then sinks down under the load. For night and day travelling, the baron invariably takes his bed with him in the sledge, so that he can sleep or wake, sit up or lie down, as he pleases. Walking is out of the question when dressed in one of those travelling cloaks and a pair of over boots. Those boots are made much like others outside, but inside are lined with the skin of some animal with thick long hair. Into those you thrust your legs, trousers, shoes, and altogether. Thus enveloped, you feel a sort of security in the coldest of weather. Englishmen, when they arrive in Russia, are apt to declare that they will never consent to pay £6, £8, or £10 for a cloak, but very few indeed continue in the same mind over a second winter.

As to animals, the wolf is very common in almost all the forests. They seldom, however, make their appearance outside; but towards the end of winter, about February and March, when driven by cold and hunger, they may be seen at the outskirts of the woods and in the open lands, or stealthily approaching a village, there to lurk at a short distance, ready to pounce upon anything that might stray a little from the huts. Cats, dogs, sheep, poultry, and children are often, I may say very often, carried away by those hungry prowlers. At midnight they are still more bold and venturesome; com-

Digitized by Google

ing close up to the doors of the huts, snuffing and howling round the cattle and poultry sheds, and too often find a way inside and carry off their prey. Further in the interior, as our master informed us, the non-increase of the population was partly attributed to these ravenous beasts. As a great portion of the land work, including ploughing, and sowing, is done by the women, it is a custom, at the spring of the year and in summer, for them to go out to work in the morning, and not return till night. In those cases they have to take their youngest child with them. They will there place it in the middle of the field, in a basket or other such thing, and now and then attend to its wants. But, so keen in their scent are these wolves, that they can mark the child from the edge of the wood. There they wait till the parents are at some distance from the child, and, availing themselves of this favourable opportunity, dart out at full speed, and seize and carry off the sleeping child, whilst the parents are busy at work, and know nothing of the matter till they return to attend to its wants. This is of such frequent occurrence, that it causes little surprise, little sorrow, and less talk. Perhaps an hour's work may be lost in consulting about it, and then the mother with the rest of the family perform their ceremonial devotions and then return to work, saying to each other, "*Boaga Znia Lutchy,*" (God knows best); and here the matter drops for ever. The English take delight in going, with dogs and guns, wolf hunting. There is very little danger in wolf hunting; I mean from the wolves themselves, as they will always fly at a dog in preference to a man. The thing to fear in wolf hunting is, getting so far into the forests, that you never find the way out again. I have had one experimental lesson on this point. From nine o'clock in the morning till dusk in the evening, we traversed the wood to find a way out. Hungry, alarmed, fatigued, we were anxiously looking at one another, and consulting what must be done, for to remain in the wood all night would very likely have been death from cold and starvation. Just then a Russian came in sight, and told us, on inquiry, that we were close at the edge of the forest, and pointed us the way out. During the day, we had several times climbed the highest trees to ascertain our position and find a way out, but all in vain. I many times promised inwardly, that if I did but get out this time, I would be careful

Digitized by Google

in future; and I kept my resolution too, for I never after entered another large forest.

The extent of forests and uninhabited land is surprising, and when people are journeying through these wilds, it is a custom to take with them a horse or two too many, such as are of the least value; so that if a pack of wolves should be encountered, they loose and leave to them the horse of least value, and by this means get rid of the hungry creatures, and drive along on their journey; though only perhaps for a short time before they have to give another horse away under the same circumstances. From all I saw or could learn of the wolf, I believe that one will run away at the sight of a man; two will move off, but in a slow, sulky, unwilling sort of way; three will follow him at a rather suspicious and too uncomfortable distance; whilst four will fearlessly attack and set upon him. But, of course, hunger in all cases will make a difference.

Now, in mentioning this circumstance of being lost in a wood to some of my friends, they asked why we did not keep going in a contrary direction to that we had come, which would soon have brought us out again. This we attempted, but unfortunately we had lost all idea as to which direction we had come. This is easily done in the twistings and turnings of a forest. From a high tree, however, the setting sun did remind us which way, and at what quarter to aim. But going right ahead in one direction here, is a poor and vague way to emerge from a forest, unless indeed you are certain in making for the point you entered. For you may go straight ahead for several days and nights, without arriving at the outskirts of the wood.

In sledging over the vast plains, and through the thick forests of Russia, the vanity and folly of Napoleon's attempt at invading it often occurred to my mind. We used to say to each other—"How very easy to see the impossibility of a hostile army traversing these almost untrodden wilds, and at the same time providing themselves with forage, food, clothing, and other necessaries."

LETTER XIV.

Many of the animals common in England are also common in Russia; but there are a few strange things connected with them there which I never saw here. I suppose the

Digitized by Google

severity of the climate is the cause of many of those differences. The common hare, for instance, invariably turns as white as snow in winter, and returns to its usual colour in spring. This, I suppose, must be nature's protection; for if it remained the same colour in winter as summer, I believe the species would soon become extinct. The whole face of the country being perfectly white, day and night, throughout the winter, the hare, if of its natural colour, would be so easily distinguished, that it would become a prey to every voracious animal. As it is, its movements are very hard to distinguish. If you knew it was on its seat, you could not see it till your feet were close upon it; and then, at starting, it would be with the greatest difficulty that you could keep sight of it for twenty seconds, although the plain before you was quite open and level. The hares in this country are very large and very cheap. I have bought hares of 14lbs. weight for 25 kopecks of silver.

A kopeck silver is about a farthing and a half, and 100 of them are equal to one rouble silver, or about 3s. 2d. English money. They must not be confounded with kopecks copper and roubles copper; three and a half of the latter always equal one of the former, and 100 kopecks of either always equal one rouble of either. This decimal coinage is very convenient in the transactions of business, and easy, too, to understand; although I suppose this new silver coinage has thrown the interior of Russia into confusion. But one great help in this land of extortions, for Englishmen, is to find the Russian figures in every way the same as their own; and although the Russians generally calculate by a sort of frame set with wires, each wire passing through a number of balls or large neck-beads, and which wires represent units, tens, hundreds, &c., and the Englishman by figures, they both arrive at the same conclusion.

But to return. There is no such thing as a game law in that country. The meanest slave, just as the greatest baron, can take his gun, net, or any other thing he chooses, where he likes, or as often as he likes, (there is a sort of national restriction at the time of breeding, but equally binding on baron and peasant) day or night, no matter; no person will interfere. It is also the same with fish, partridge, pheasant, ducks, and all other animals which we consider game. In

Digitized by Google

summer time, the mill hands where I was employed had large nets; and on a holyday, men and boys, women and young girls, (all slaves) would go together to draw the river in different places, one lot taking the net, the other taking hold of hands and wading the river in front to prevent the escape of the fish. In this way they would take an immense quantity in one day.

I lately read in a public paper a statement from an individual who described the Russians as having a most awful horror and fear of the sea, and consequently being the poorest and worst sailors in the world. This was to prove how unfit they were to cope with our navy. As regards being bad sailors and unable to contend with the English, this may be true—I dare say it is true; but this I know, that whether they have a horror or not of the salt water, they have very little fear of fresh water; and for my part, I never saw anything to indicate a fear of the sea. If they have an inefficient navy, I think it must arise from some other cause. I think Englishmen who have lived in Russia will bear me out if I assert that the Russians have less, far less, fear of water than the English. Which of us in England has seen 20, 30, or 40 young lads and lasses, under 20 years of age, take hold of hands and plunge into a river, neck deep the first step, wade about, and amuse themselves in deep as well as shallow water, a portion of them crossing over places between two and three yards deep, sometimes the head out, sometimes over head, but principally borne across by having hold of the hands of those in the more shallow water. Every portion of the gang will in turn cross this deep and dangerous part, and this for mere amusement. All sorts of wild evolutions are performed by the company while in the water; sometimes attempting to run races, swimming, rolling over each other, standing on each other's shoulders, then falling headlong into the river again. Now, compare this with the bath of an English lady, although in the grasp of a conductress—timidly and cautiously proceeding in the shallow water, inch by inch, step by step, trembling, sighing, shrieking, and often fainting before the water has reached the knee. Compare the two cases, I say, and then tell me whether it be the "Anglee" (as the Russians say) or the Russ that fears the water? I have been led away from my notes to make these remarks, by reading in a London paper how universally the Russians dreaded water.

Digitized by Google

To return again. Although all our hands were slaves, and, in every sense, the master's property, a great number of them had guns, powder, shot, nets, and other tackle, and, after the early morning service was over, spent their Sundays and holydays in shooting, fishing, netting, and other amusements, according to their different tastes and inclinations. In the winter time, the skin of the hare being double coated with hair and perfectly white, makes a warm and pretty lining for the young women's "shubes." For this purpose our hands used to save them. Foxes were not numerous about us. Bears I never saw, but have been shown footprints, which the Russians said were those of the bear. Rabbits I neither saw nor heard of; indeed, I don't see how they could exist. Should a rabbit enter its burrow some evening in October, it might find itself shut in by snow in the morning, and frozen up secure enough till April or May following.

Birds, in this country, are far more numerous, and in greater variety, than in England. Most of them, however, disappear in the winter; those which remain scarcely look like the same birds in winter, being more bulky, double-coated, thick, and heavy-laden with feathers. Wild ducks and geese, about the break-up and spring, are very numerous, and great numbers of them are shot by the peasants, and sold to the English and others at a few kopecks each.

LETTER XV.

There are a few birds which remain in Russia over the winter season. The crow and the jackdaw, I think, are the most common. These birds are as tame here in the winter, as the pigeon is in England. The crows in Russia are half black and half grey; as far as colour goes, they may be said to be half crow and half magpie. The Russians say that this colored crow was never seen in that country before the campaign of the French, at which time they first made their appearance in large numbers, to feed upon the dead bodies of the French soldiers, and since which time they have remained and settled in the country to perpetuate in the memory of the people the signal defeat of the "Enemies of God and the Emperor of Russia!" This sort of crow is, I think, the commonest of all birds in the country, and appears to be exceedingly fond of carrion, but will also feed upon all

Digitized by Google

sorts of food that serves for hens, ducks, and poultry. In the winter season the crows and jackdaws are standing upon the door steps with the hens, and other fowls, patiently waiting for the throwing out of the dish washings, the leavings of meals, and the crumbs that may be given to the poultry. When this is done a sort of row takes place, and they will scarcely move out of the way for you. The tameness of these birds was one thing that appeared rather singular to me. At nights they roost under cattle sheds, about the villages, in attics of the huts, or any where that affords warmth and shelter. The attic of our factory was literally filled with them every night; indeed, in the day time too. In the construction of huts, sheds, and any other buildings, this is always attended to; there is scarcely any sort of building but affords shelter for birds somewhere about it. They seem to take a delight in making this provision. I almost think they consider it to be a duty incumbent upon them to do so; and however barbarous and savage the Russians may be in appearance, they are certainly not so in disposition; for I scarcely ever saw them lift a hand to harm any thing, and I was often pleased to witness the tenderness evinced towards birds, dogs, cats, and indeed all dumb animals; a great contrast in this respect to the English. I dare say it will not be credited when I say I have seen crows and pigeons, jackdaws and sparrows, on the floors of the different shopkeepers, and when the corn bin has been opened, a general rush by them all; the shopkeeper only bearing them off by one arm, while with the other hand he measured out the corn to his customers. Even the little boys in the villages will never be seen to lift a stone, for the purpose of throwing at a bird; and they, in their turn, seem to appreciate their kindness, for they will almost allow themselves to be handled by the boys. In one instance I witnessed, when one of our joiners had been working for some time near a swallow's nest in the summer, the little fondling perching near him, and cowering down till he stroked it with his hand. This he did, at my request, to satisfy my curiosity. Now although these are trifling matters, they were so pleasing to me, compared with the habits of English people, and English boys particularly, in this respect, and the general shyness of English birds, that I could not help making notes of them. Any person who has travelled through Russian villages will

Digitized by Google

have had his curiosity excited by little boxes being fixed towards the tops of trees, or, where there are no trees, upon the top of long poles fixed in the ground; those boxes are put there for sparrows to build their nests, and they never fail to avail themselves of them. There are many other traits in the Russian character in the same direction, which have either escaped, or else been beneath the notice of other writers on Russia and the Russians. To my mind, however, these little incidents offer some real indications as to the general disposition of the people. The birds about one village and the people of the same village seem to be familiar with and to recognise each other: a regular sympathy appears to exist between them; for they are not so tame to a Russian from a distance as they are to one of their own village, nor a tenth part as tame and unsuspecting with an Englishman and foreigner, as they are with a Russian. I do not know whether these things would be confirmed by Englishmen who have lived in Russia, for I am not aware of any besides myself who have condescended to learn or notice them. As an individual, however, I derived much delight, much amusement, and much instruction from the notice of these (to many) insignificant circumstances. I may just state, that I never saw a gun raised to shoot any bird that haunts the villages. Pigeons are very numerous, but, like crows and daws, they belong to no one. Every person offers them food and shelter, and, I believe, they are considered a holy bird. Hawks also are very numerous, but more shy than any of those birds mentioned above. It is no uncommon thing to see six, eight, or ten at once, sporting over your head. Even in Moscow I have counted to the number of fourteen poising in the air above the house tops, all in sight at the same time, and now and then one darting down in the street or back yards upon an unfortunate sparrow, which is borne away to the gilded dome of some old Greek church, or to the ruins of the great and once splendid theatre of Moscow, which was burnt down whilst I was there.

LETTER XVI.

There is just another sort of bird that I noticed in Russia, and of which I took note, viz., the woodpecker.

While I am on the subject of the Russian winter, I may

Digitized by Google

just mention, as another curiosity, the frozen flesh and fowl market. Here there are different kinds of birds and fowls plucked and cleaned, in all the ridiculous attitudes imaginable; some in a running posture, some in a fighting posture; others, such as the duck and drake, cock and hen, in positions causing much merriment and laughter amongst the boys. It only needs that they prop up, or by any other means fix them for a few hours, in any position they please, and the frost will keep them so for the remaining part of the winter. Little porklings and other animals used for food, are also made to represent life; and so correctly, that a foreigner, at a short distance, seeing a few dozens of those little pigs standing on their legs in the market place, would be tempted to discredit his own eyes. There is one good thing connected with the Russian winter; flesh meat will keep any length of time. As an experiment, I dipped a joint of meat in cold water, and when it had properly frozen, I dipped it again, and kept repeating the operation until the joint appeared as if encased in a thick coating of clear glass, through which I could see plainly every part of it. I then hung this up in the out kitchen as a curiosity, and often wished I could send it in this state as a present to some friends in England. Now although the cold is so severe, I think it must be congenial to health notwithstanding. The atmosphere is so very clear, that you may distinguish every motion of a cow, horse, sheep, or any other animal, at a great distance; and as English (newly arrived) say, "it is like looking through a spy glass."* Another thing which I consider worthy of remark is, that as far as my observation went, I never knew or saw one single individual troubled with rheumatism; and this first gave me the idea (right or wrong I do not know,) that so much rheumatism in England must be in a great part attributable to the changeableness of the weather. We have first a dry morning, next a wet morning, then a misty, damp, or foggy morning, and then perhaps a fine morning—there it is a continual clear, fine, dry, piercing frost, and so free from dampness, that I could travel on the snow in my stocking feet without perceiving the least wet or damp. Indeed, I have yet in

* When I spoke of the extraordinary clearness of the atmosphere, I meant this to apply to the interior; it is not exactly applicable to the country about St. Petersburg and near the sea.

Digitized by Google

my possession a pair of winter boots adapted purposely for travelling on ice or snow, and these are made of felt, which would most assuredly gather damp if any was to be found.

LETTER XVII.

At the request of several friends I will give a few particulars of our journey to and into the interior of Russia. We set sail from Hull in a fine steamer, the last voyage that was being made for that season; so late, indeed, that snow had begun to fall when we arrived at St. Petersburg. We had a moderate passage, and, with the exception of the North Sea and that part called the Cattegat, we had a pretty steady sea. Generally on the North Sea there are strong heavy winds—so said the sailors—and so it was with us, both going and when we returned. The North Sea is the place that is sure to find out those who, up to this time, have experienced no sea sickness. Some of our passengers were taken almost immediately after starting out, others of us felt not the least symptons on that day, and had begun to smile at and joke with those who had been sea sick nearly all the way, priding ourselves that the time with us had gone by. We good humouredly remarked to the others that they must be soft; the sailors, hearing those remarks, began to laugh and wink at each other, now and then casting a scornful smile at us who had so far escaped, and singing or humming

"There's a good time coming boys,
"Wait a little longer."

Those hints made us suspect that all was not right yet with us; and very shortly afterwards the heaving, rocking, and tossing of the vessel, from the strong winds that arose, threw us into such a state of sickness that we realized the full meaning of the sailors' hints, who now went and whispered in the ears of those whom we had pointed at as soft, that the "strong men had fallen." However, we had another "bad time," and that was in the Cattegat. This was a regular storm; such an one as I did not expect to witness, nor do I wish to experience again. A "storm at sea" is so often read of and so well understood that it needs no additional remarks from me. But persons intending to go to St. Petersburg, and wishing to have a fine pleasant voyage, should not put it off till the last

Digitized by Google

boat of the season. On our voyage out, as well as back, we put in at Copenhagen; we went through all the principal streets, and examined the different places of note, many of which, from reading of Nelson, and Hamlet, we felt anxious to see. The Danes are a kind, fair-dealing, and good-natured people. You will seldom see one without a cigar in his mouth. Many of the common people wear a curious sort of shoes or rather clogs; they are made from a solid piece of wood, and the inside by some means scooped out to the exact shape of the foot. To show the difference of disposition in the people of Denmark and those of Russia, as regards honesty and fair dealing with strangers, I will relate a circumstance of which I took note. After I had arrived at St. Petersburg, I changed my English for Russian money, I had some purchases to make. A few small articles I purchased without assistance; but, by trusting to the honesty of the traders and shopkeepers, I invariably found when the articles came to be examined by English residents, that they had charged silver roubles and silver kopecks, instead of copper roubles and copper kopecks. In one instance I went back with an English resident to the shopkeeper, and got the overcharged money returned. But I soon found it was no go to trust to the honesty of the trader. It is absolutely necessary that one who has been in the country some time, and who understands the money and can speak the language, should go with strangers to make their purchases; and even then they will ask twice as much for an article as they will ultimately take. But they will one and all impose upon strangers. Not so the Danes. On my way home again we called at Copenhagen: and as I had both English and Russian coins, I resolved to try fairly, and contrast the honesty of the Danes with that of the Russians. But I had no Danish money, neither did I understand it or their language. I went into the market-place, and at one stand I took up a curious sort of pipe, in payment for which I offered a piece of Russian silver which I knew was its full value. But the owner of the stall shook his head, (we could not speak to each other.) I then offered another, but only got another shake of the head. I then offered another, and another, but all in vain. I also tried English money, but to no purpose. At last, to convince me, he took my money and put it all back into my pocket, and the pipe along with it, indicating, as I thought,

Digitized by Google

that rather than take too much he would give me the pipe for nothing. This, however, I refused, returned him the pipe, and left him, unable to complete a bargain. With another person, who understood the Russian coin, I showed him a handful of pieces for him to take pay out himself for a small article that I took up to purchase. He took pay from my hand, and on inquiry afterwards I found he had only taken its exact value. A Russian would have taken it all. I then visited a woman who had a load of fruit exposed for sale. I pointed at a small measure which was filled ready for sale, at the same time offering a Russian piece of silver, which according to the comparative value of the fruit and money in Russia, I knew to be twice or thrice its value. She could not speak Russ, nor did she understand the value of the coin, and this she indicated, as far as possible, by her motions, and then took hold of my hand and money, and thrust both together into my pocket again. But, determined not to be "said nay," to, I pulled it out again, still pointing at the measure of fruit. Seeing at last that it was of no use to try and put me off, but buy I would, right or wrong, she, with a good-humoured laugh, took my money, and went into two or three shops close by to learn its value, after which she came back and filled a measure some three or four times as large as the one I had pointed out, and holding the coin close to the measure, showed me by signs that it and the money were of equal value. I therefore nodded assent, thinking I could take as much of the fruit as I thought proper, and leave the rest. In this I was disappointed, for she then became as importunate in forcing the fruit upon me as I had been to force upon her my money. After I had filled a coat pocket from the measure, I nodded, and turned away, making signs that I had as much as I needed. But she had got the money, and I must take the fruit. It was of no use to offer objections; she only talked to me harder and faster in the Danish tongue, one word of which I did not understand. She shouted at and followed me with the fruit, seized me by the coat laps, and began stuffing the fruit into my other pockets. In vain I tried to convince the other fruit women (that by this time had collected round us) that I did not need or desire any more. They only talked to me still harder than the first; I saw at once that there was but one alternative, and that was taking to my heels; for I

Digitized by Google

knew my pockets would not hold half of the fruit. Upon second thoughts, however, I dare not put this experiment into force, for fear the fruit women would set after me, and create some row and excitement, in which I should be sure to be taken. I therefore considered it more prudent to remain motionless on the spot, and suffer them to heap upon me this enormous load of fruit. The women were diverted to the life at this good joke, and I also joined in their good hearty laughing, and became determined to empty the measure, if possible. When every pocket was full to the top, they took off my cap, after filling which they placed my hands before me, one on the top of the other, so that a considerable quantity could be piled up in front of my person. By one shift and another, I was made to carry on and about me this confounded measure of fruit, and then the women left me with a good loud hearty laugh, in which I could not help joining as heartily. Here I was, in the middle of the market-place, bare headed, every pocket stuffed full of fruit, my arms heaped up in front, with my cap brim-full placed on the top. In this manner I walked away a short distance, and then began, as slily as I could, to scatter a few here and there as I walked along, not daring to look back; in this way I got my arms, cap, and pockets at liberty again, and was very glad to take the shortest and quickest "cut" out of the market and down to our vessel again. As I walked away from this unlucky fruit cart, being a stranger and foreigner, and in the ludicrous attitude above described, of course I became an object of general observation, and was accordingly saluted by each person I passed, with some sort of droll and laughable remark; and here I must confess, that I felt a certain sort of security and satisfaction in not understanding a word they said. In my own mind, however, I explained all their remarks to mean, "You're just right serv'd." But, to conclude, from all I saw, heard, and could learn, the Danes are a much more honest, fairdealing, kindly, good-humoured, and good-natured pepole than the Russians.

LETTER XVIII.

After clearing out of Copenhagen, which the sailors call their "half-way house," the other part of the voyage (if the weather be fine) is much more pleasant, interesting, and varie-

Digitized by Google

gated, particularly while sailing in sight of the coasts of Norway and Sweden, after passing which we are soon in sight of some parts of the Russian territory. Just before we arrived before Cronstadt we were ordered to select everything we should be likely to want from our trunks and boxes, as nothing could be touched after we arrived at that place. When in sight of Cronstadt, the Russian bearded officials came out to meet us, examined the captain's papers and the passports of the passengers, ordered down into the hold everything possible to be put there, and then affixed to the door a Russian seal, of enormous size, after which the door must not be opened, but by the official or through his orders. The officials take a thread and carry it from one loose article to another, affixing it to each with wax and the Russian stamp, until every article on deck, and every place containing luggage, merchandise, or other thing, is thus taken in by the thread, so that neither a door can be opened nor article removed without breaking the thread and seal. This is done when a vessel arrives too late in the evening to be examined. They then left on board several Russian officers or watchmen in charge of the vessel till morning. Our deck very much resembled the web of a spider, and it was with the utmost difficulty we could stir our feet without having them in the meshes of this northern net. In the morning everything was taken on board a small vessel, or rather vessels, along with ourselves, and conveyed to St. Petersburg, and given into the charge of the custom-house officers there. Next day we had to attend, and bring with us the keys of our trunks and boxes, which were then opened in their presence, and, one by one, every article they contained was lifted out and examined. This is a most tedious, troublesome, and vexatious affair, and can be rendered much more so by the whims of the examining officers—often detaining the passenger day after day, scrupling, hesitating, and objecting to this, that, and the other frivolous matter. Every iota of this, however, from first to last, can be dispensed with by those who understand Russian roubles and Russian corruption; and, although they extort many hundred roubles from both strangers and traders in this way, in the shape of bribes, they, nevertheless, sometimes meet with their match. A person whom I knew well, and who had lived in Russia previously for many years, but

Digitized by Google

who had been to England and was returning to Russia, had many articles in his boxes which he knew were liable to heavy duty. He told the official that he was in great haste, and if this great delay of examination could be dispensed with he would not mind giving away a ten rouble note which he had in his pocket. The boxes were then opened, and a sort of sham inspection gone through, and all was over in a few minutes, his luggage loaded and off in a crack. The official then touched his cap and said, "The ten rouble note, baron." "Oh," said the gentleman, "this ten rouble note I did not intend for you, but for your superior officer, to whom I am now going to present it." The poor official saw his dilemma, begged, prayed, and beseeched him not to name it to that person, but to make his exit and say no more about it. Although they all take bribes, they all want to do it, if possible, unknown to the rest; and if a person can speak the language, and has money in his pocket, he may almost do anything in Russia. When we got fairly clear of the custom-house, we naturally felt a desire to see Petersburg, for we knew that in a few days we should have to take the diligence for the interior, so that no time was to be lost. When we first got sight of Petersburg, and as we sailed up the Neva, the numerous domes of the churches were really enchanting. Neither did our admiration diminish as we paced the streets; but, as so many descriptions of this place are being published, it is useless to enlarge here. However we visited the palace, the different institutions, the monument of Peter the Great, his old house, and a great many places of note, to which we were directed by the English residents in Petersburg. When the time arrived for our departure into the interior, some of the English residents learned that I was going to attempt the journey without laying in a few bottles of spirits. This "wild notion" seemed to create very much surprise amongst them. They told me, whatever I did besides, not to be foolish and stupid at this time, just when winter was about to set in. They laid before me instances where both passengers and driver had been taken from their seats at the journey's end, all dead and frozen as stiff as the shafts of the sledges in which they rode; and as the driver was in his usual sitting position, whip in hand, their lifeless state was not known till the horses galloped up to the inn with their load. Other

Digitized by Google

similar frightful cases were laid before me; and they begged I would not attempt a thing that no man had done. In vain I told them that I thought those cases mentioned were the effects of severe cold rather than the want of spirits. It is hard, indeed, and very trying, to refuse the advice of those whom you know are sincere, and wish you well. But I was compelled at last, though with great reluctance, to tell them plainly—in answer to their assertions that I should be a dead man at the journey's end—that, dead or alive, I meant to try it on; but at the same time I felt grateful for their good wishes, and I believed they were sincere in their advice for my good, so also was I thankful to them. "But," said I, "do believe me, it is neither stupidity nor ungratefulness on my part, but solely because I entertain a different opinion of the properties of intoxicating liquors to yourselves." I told them I had never tasted intoxicating liquors since hearing a lecture on "Malt Liquor," by Mr. Livesey, of Preston, in England, which was now sixteen years ago; and, although I gave them credit for their good intentions towards me, I still thought they might be mistaken as to the effects intoxicating drinks would have on the constitution, even in the cold climate of Russia. They therefore gave me up in pity, told me I should take my own course, and they only hoped I should live to see the end of the journey; which journey, I am happy to say, I performed throughout quite as well without, as the others on the same diligence did with intoxicating liquors.

LETTER XIX.

In my last I stated that I accomplished the journey inland, as well without as any of my travelling companions did with the use of intoxicating liquors. I do not mean to say, however, that I experienced no suffering and inconvenience; on the contrary, it was certainly the greatest trial, for suffering and privation, I ever underwent in my life. We took our seats on the diligence at St. Petersburg one evening at six o'clock. Our first stage, or rather the destination, of the first part of our inland journey, was Moscow, a distance of, or somewhere near, 500 miles, night and day travelling, without stopping for anything but to change horses and drivers; and although the

Digitized by Google

road from Petersburg to Moscow is perhaps the best road in the whole country, it is not to be compared with the high roads in England. At all events we were five nights and four days, and never stopped for anything but what I mentioned above. To sit still for this length of time, without ever being washed, shaved, undressed, or having any change of linen, at the season when winter is about setting in, with nothing but English clothing—this, I say, was such a task as I never before experienced. There was not one of us could speak to either the driver or anybody else, nor did we meet with a single individual between Petersburg and Moscow that could speak a word to us; but, when necessity prompted, we found that motions and signs would do more things than we ever before imagined. For instance, no person need be at a loss to convey to another the idea that he requires food or nourishment, he has only to set his jaws in motion and point at them, and he will soon have eatables placed before him; only it is not every Englishman who at first can exactly relish, or is prepared to swallow a pint of train oil, and bread the same color as his hat. Besides, at these post-houses, horses are always in readiness, and a very few minutes will suffice for changing, and you must be off. Indeed, had you an hour's time, you might as well whistle as try to tell them what sort of eatables you want; and again, I believe many of those Jewish-looking proprietors have no desire to be convinced as to what sort of food you wish for, as it answers their purpose quiet as well to set something before you, the very smell of which, if it fills no belly, will satisfy you for the present. You are therefore exceedingly glad to find that, in this land of serfdom and slavery, you have still the liberty to leave it if you don't like it, and of which liberty you are almost sure to avail yourself. Payment, however, in either case is demanded. The first night of our travelling we spent in trying to get to sleep, but as far as I was concerned, it was to no purpose whatever. At daylight next morning we had our first view of the flat plains, extensive forests, and the country in general. The villages and huts on the roadside, between the ancient and modern capitals, are the best built and most respectable in appearance of any in the interior; but nevertheless the low, mean, miserable aspect of both huts and occupiers, soon convinced me that St. Petersburg was not

Digitized by Google

Russia. A certain traveller has said that to know Russia, a person must travel between the two capitals, and contrast the poverty, dirt, and degradation of the people in the country with the rich, showy, splended, dazzling appearance of the capitals. But I say, further, to know Russia, he must abandon the high roads, and strike off either to the right or left, as far on the cross road as it is from one capital to the other on the Emperor's high road. After we had settled at the place of our destination, we practiced this cross-country travelling on a pretty large scale, at the various religious holydays, some of which are of one, two, and three weeks' duration; and I may truly say that a person who has not done this, does not, cannot know, Russia as it really is. But to return: we drove along our journey, interesting ourselves as best we could, and sleeping as often as we could. But there is such a sameness of country and scenes, that you soon become tired and weary with the never changing face of the country—forest and plain, and that continually on a dead level, day after day, always the same. When daylight broke upon us in the morning, on taking a full view of the country round about, there was such a sameness, that had we not known positively that the horses had been galloping all night, we could almost have sworn we were on the very spot when daylight left us the night before. The first two nights and days we kept up our spirits and got along pretty well. The third and fourth we began to feel weary, starved, dirty, and in a lost condition, and much anxiety as to whether the proper use of our limbs would ever return. Sitting still for this length of time, with no exercise, we could devise no plan to keep our legs and feet warm. Stiff, cold, heavy, and benumbed, we began to be alarmed, and all our thoughts were absorbed as to how soon we should be at Moscow.

However, Moscow at length broke upon our sight; and when the driver pointing with his whip, exclaiming "Mosquah, Mosquah!" a thrill of electricity went through us, and every eye was fixed upon this long-looked-for, old "City of God," as the Russians call it. As we approached this ancient capital, reflections of what I had read in history about it crowded upon my mind as I gazed upon its hundreds of glittering churches. I reflected how often this fine city had been destroyed. At the close of the thirteenth century, if I mistake not, this devoted place was utterly destroyed by the Tartars. In 1600

Digitized by Google

a fearful famine (when mothers, it is said, ate their own offspring) carried off 500,000 of the population, and 120,000 corpses lay in the streets unburied. In 1610 or 1612 there was another slaughter, though of less extent. In 1769, or thereabouts, 800 per day was carried off by the plague; and lastly, the devastation of fire, sword, and the invading army of Napoleon, laid this city in the dust. But here it was before my eyes, shining, dazzling, and enchanting to the eye, greater now than at any former period in every respect. As I entered its gates, thus reflecting on its past history (having little thought at one time that I should ever see it), I felt so awe-stricken that I was unable to address my travelling companions. We drove through the streets to an English house, happy in the extreme to again hear and speak the English language.

LETTER XX.

After we had taken a good rest at the English house in Moscow, and recovered the proper use and feeling of our limbs, our first thought was about seeing the Kremlin, and other places of which we had often heard and read. Although we had not much time to lose, for our stay at Moscow was to be very short, we determined not to leave the town till we had spent a day or two in it. But, though deprived at this time of gratifying my desire to see Moscow thoroughly, I had subsequently abundant opportunities of doing so; for I several times visited and lived there for two or three weeks at once. The last time was when I was about to leave the country, when I spent between three weeks and a month in this interesting city, a few brief remarks upon which I may give in another letter.

About seven o'clock one evening we again took our seats in a far worse conveyance than the first, and on a road so bad now, that it baffles description, for another "go" at night and day travelling. Passing over the incidents on the road, we arrived at the works for which we had been engaged in England, and were now at our journey's end, and at our new home." The first thing that excited my wonder was to see such extensive cotton works, so far from England in such a lonely spot, as I had been brought up with the idea that it

Digitized by Google

belonged to England alone to manufacture. I could scarcely believe my own eyes when I saw a mill of four stories, between 40 and 50 windows long, and breadth to allow a mule or spinning machine, of nearly 700 spindles (weft space), leaving a passage or aisle of sufficient width, that a waggon and four might easily pass from one end of a room to the other. I though it a rather curious sight to see this machinery tended by men with their beards hanging down to their breasts. The mills in the country run night and day, and have two sets of hands. The day always begins at seven o'clock in the evening; this set work till one o'clock in the morning. Then the other set present themselves, and take the work from the hands of the first set, who now retire to eat and sleep, and again resume work at seven in the morning. Thus, you see, they work and sleep alternately six hours at a time. When they have done this for a week, the two sets exchange their times of working, so that the set who last week took the first change in the twenty-four hours, will now have to take the second—viz., from one in the morning to seven o'clock; the other set commencing at seven in the evening, and working till one in the morning. Thus they go on the year round. In St. Petersburg, I believe, no night work is allowed. Another curious thing to an Englishman is, to see every person, old and young, male and female, "groped," or searched, every time the mill looses—viz., four times every twenty-four hours. Persons are appointed to stand at the mill door, and as quick as they conveniently can, search from head to foot every individual going out—no matter what his occupation, overlooker or book-keeper (Englishmen of course, excepted) all undergo the search; but, in spite of all, they both do and will steal. As our people, or factory hands, all belonged to the master, no one could leave his employ. Knowing this, nothing of course had been thought of by the overseers or foremen but punishment for disobedience, negligence, bad or spoiled work, or any other fault; but as the enforcement of the Russian sort of punishment is the most disagreeable thing to the feelings of an Englishman that he has to encounter, the other Englishman and myself agreed to try the effect, through an interpreter, of persuasion and little presents. A few kopecks were considered by them a fine present, and we were surprised and delighted to find how

Digitized by Google

well it succeeded in securing attention, good work, and obedience. The words "Will you try?" seemed to be new in the ears of a slave; but when improvement in work, either in quantity or quality was made evident, and a small present of twenty or thirty kopecks was made, this went round the mill like lightning. The poor serfs seemed to be unconscious that it was much more agreeable to us to give even as many roubles, rather than have to enforce the rod upon grown-up men and women. At the commencement of the present war, our works ceased to run, and came to a dead stand, and when we were about to leave them finally, I shall not all at once forget the affection the poor factory serfs manifested at our departure. They collected round the conveyance with tears in their eyes, to shake hands, and bid us good bye, and say, "God bless you." We then distributed a few gifts, and drove off, with our eyes full, and our hearts moved, to witness the tenderness of feeling and sincere affection of those wild-looking, uncultivated inhabitants of the interior of Russia. Now, although these people are subject to many things that would break the hearts of Englishmen, their slavery in many respects is more a name than a reality, with the exception of the soldiery. I never saw any want of food amongst them, but always plenty; that is, of the sort they have always been accustomed to. At a factory their meals and food are obliged to be regulated more by system than choice (from the very large number to be provided for.) The people in the villages cook, eat, and diversify their food to their own taste and inclination. In summer they have all sorts of vegetables, and plenty of them, many of which they succeed in preserving for their own use during the winter; and as every man is a farmer, he can have milk, eggs, bacon, and flesh meat; also butter and cheese, if they knew or would be taught how to make it, but they will not. Village life is like their village *weaving*— As it was, so it is, and so it is ever likely to remain.

LETTER XXI.

Another good feature (if I may so express it) in Russian slavery is this, that to whomsoever they may be sold, or however often they may change masters, no man can buy them off the land. Their land belongs to them, and they

Digitized by Google

to the land: in this respect they are part and parcel, and it may happen, and frequently does, that they change masters several times in a year, and know nothing of it till the *obroke* (body tax) is collected, and it matters as little to them who is their master or baron. When the people are sold, it means the land or the estate is sold, and it is as unlawful to attempt the former separately, as it is impossible to remove the latter. Slaves here know nothing of being carried away to another part of the country, separating brothers and sisters, wives and husbands, parents and children. Again, whatever may befall a person (or family) through sickness, old age, accident, or other unavoidable calamity, he is always sure of his food; for in such cases the baron to whom he belongs must provide for him. It has been that the baron has refused to do this, and the same has reached the ears of the Emperor; who after full inquiry, having found it really so, has ordered the confiscation of the whole of his property, and sent the baron himself to Siberia. Now, on however large a scale the Emperor himself may practise this on his army, he certainly will not allow it with his barons. I have visited many villages, some of which belong to barons, and some to his imperial majesty. I have questioned the people in both? I have done this, too, in different parts of the country; but I invariably found that they had much rather be the property of the crown or Emperor, than belong to a baron. I suppose he must demand less *obroke* from them. Now, although the state of serfdom is such that no Englishman could or would submit to it, I really believe that they have less thought, less care, less anxiety of mind, and on the whole more content, than the people of England. For what would be to the English unbearable, degrading, and humiliating, they neither know, see, nor feel to be so. Even when a brother, son, husband, or other relative is fetched from amongst them, without a moment's warning, to serve in the Emperor's army on the extremities, perhaps, of his vast empire, and whom they never expect to see again, it affects them far less, and for a much shorter time than English people could imagine. They console themselves with the idea that it must be necessary, for it is only what it always has been; and they are regularly taught by their priests that anything enjoined by God or the Emperor, must calmly be submitted to. Consequently the affair

Digitized by Google

soon passes off, and settles down with the expression of their national maxim, "*Boga znia Lutchy*" (God knows best). Thus, then, the thing is over, and apparently forgotton; the relatives submitting to their fate with (as the priests say) a Christianlike resignation, which often reminded me very forcibly of the words—

"Where ignorance is bliss,
"'Tis folly to be wise."

Again, they are not without their times and seasons of real enjoyment, especially in summer. Although the summer is intolerably hot, and but of short duration, they avail themlselves of every opportunity to realize its blessings; and many a time when I have seen young-men, as also young women, in groups of 40 to 50, bare-footed and bare-legged—in fact, all but naked—ranging the woods and commons, singing and dancing their wild fantastic airs, with hearts as light as the lark that soars and tunes above their heads, and minds as free from thought, care, and anxiety as the smiling babe at the mother's breast—often I say, as I have watched them, have I thought how ready they would be to exclaim, "Russia, with all thy faults I love thee still." Speaking of the peasants of Russia in general, good trade, bad trade, news, and politics are things that seem never to enter their heads. They trust solely to their land, and seldom indeed, I believe, does it fail them. In the spring and summer, land produce and all other such things come forward as if by magic, and very nearly without "till" or labour. They do, certainly, profess to partially "till" their land about every third year; but this, I suspect, is more an act of necessity, to make room to "live" than a desire to increase or improve their crops. For it must be understood that both the cattle and the people all live under the same shed, only the family may have a portion railed off by boughs or brambles in which to eat and sleep, and which they call their house part. Consequently the whole of the area under this shed is literally filled with dirt, refuse, and every abominable nuisance. Then, indeed, they are obliged to either "till" the land or raise their shed another story. The former, I suppose, is the more convenient; so the dirt is then carted away and spread upon the land. Immediately after the disappearance of the snow, the spring and summer are ushered in very

Digitized by Google

suddenly, so much so that a person may go to bed at night leaving the fields, forests, and face of the country with a dark, dead, winterly look and aspect, and find them next morning fresh, green, and budding in spring. The summers in Russia are charming and delightful as the winters are dreary, gloomy, and desolate; but they are of short duration, and certainly rather unpleasantly hot, but always cool in the evenings. A person in the winter is apt to predict and picture to himself the happy hours he will spend in the summer under the spreading branches of the large trees by the river edge, and in the cool groves of the forest; but when the time arrives, the swarms of tormenting musquitoes are sure to render his hopes and expectations vain and futile.

LETTER XXII.

I have been reminded about mentioning village weaving and not giving a description of it. I was under the impression that this had been done in a former letter; a few words must now suffice. I have said that every family makes its own machinery, grows its own material, and spins, weaves, and completes its own linen. A pair of village looms is the most amusing piece of machinery I ever saw in my life. They are like a certain temple of old, not a nail about them; nor do I remember having seen metal of any description about them. They have two or three substitutes for nails. They first go into the forest, cut down timber, such as they think is best adapted for looms, carry it home, and set about the construction. In jointing the corners of the loom and connecting the various parts, they sometimes dovetail, sometimes let the parts in and fasten with a wooden wedge, all being done by the axe. At other times they will find a piece of young timber that will bend to the form they want, or near enough to answer their purpose, and some I have seen with their parts fastened together by withes, willows, and long grass. Their weaving, too, is of the same primitive description, the shuttle flying out every time it is pitched across at both sides. Some have a sort of rude picking-stick, others send it through with the hand; but none of them have anything placed to prevent the shuttle going a yard or two too far, and entirely out of their reach. They all very patiently continue all day to fetch back

Digitized by Google

the shuttle, at both sides, and then place it at the edge of the cloth, again to be as far thrown out on the other side. We showed them by placing a piece of board at one end of the slays, how easy it would be to prevent the shuttle from getting out of their reach, and calculated for them the saving of time and labour; but they only smiled at us, pushed away the board, and told us their fathers did not do so. As to the saving of time, they could not see that it would be anything in their way, for they could not, at this season (winter), follow any out-work or land labour. "Well then" said we, "if you have nothing else to do, weave on with the improvement we have shown you. You will very soon, at all events, have so much cloth that, after your own usual supply, you can have as much left to sell or barter with others; this, you know, will be all profit." "O, but," said they, "nobody needs any; every family makes as much as they want." "Well, but," said we, "on our principle one pair of looms would do as much as three on your principle, so that there must be a great saving, as two pair out of every three would not be needed." "But," said they, "we see no saving in that, for our looms cost nothing." "Well, then," we said, go on as you are; perhaps your own plan is the best." In fact, we thought it useless to argue any longer, when neither time, labour, room, machinery, nor material was of any value at all. It was witnessing these things that caused me to say of village weaving, As it was, so it is, and ever will be.

In my last, I was speaking about their summer. Their hay time is something worthy of note. When a baron has a piece of land to get, that is, to clear it of hay, he gives notice to a certain village that the people must start on such a morning, at such a date, and it may be observed they never expect any interruption from bad weather, and very seldom indeed, I believe, does it impede their hay or harvest operations. However, when the date arrives for commencing hay time, the whole village will be in motion—men, women, and children, horses yoked up, and conveyances loaded with tents and other materials. When all is ready, they will move off, bag and baggage, in one general caravan, to the field or to the piece of land to be cleared of its hay. The breadth or size of the piece of land may be equal in area to 20 or 30 English fields. The whole of the villages then fix their tents

Digitized by Google

upon it, and they eat, sleep, and live altogether, until the last cartful of hay disappears from the field, when the whole of them disappear with it. While they are getting this hay, there are, perhaps, only three or four left in the village, who are appointed to look after the cattle that cannot be moved. There were a few miles of meadow land near where we lived. I was surprised one day, when we loosed for dinner, to see a whole line of tents pitched upon one side of it, and literally alive with men, women, children, and cattle. Shortly afterwards, about 50 men and women promiscuously were seen cutting their way into the grass, not in the same manner as English mowers, all striking at once, but every man and woman striking in their scythes at their own time and in their own peculiar way; and although there were nearly as many different motions as mowers, they seemed pretty well agreed on one point, that was, to mow with straight backs; indeed, I believe the whole of that hay was got in without any of them bending their backs at all—they mow, row, cock, spread abroad, and load with straight backs, and the first time I watched them I remarked this to another Englishman, and requested him to wait and see how they would manage to spread abroad with straight backs; however when they had finished the rowing, they all very systematically turned the other end of their rakes, and thus most easily and surprisingly accomplished it without bending their backs in this part of hay-making also. In their mowing they stand up straight, taking at each stroke only a few blades of grass, but striking so fast and often, that if you saw a field of mowers at a distance they seemed to be handloom weaving rather than mowing; I mean from their motions. The summer being so short, much work has to be done in a little time, consequently they are at it early and late, but in the summer season it is scarcely ever dark. It is no uncommon thing to sit at the door reading at twelve o'clock at night, and when it does darken, twilight will appear again in an hour: indeed, I may safely say that it is never properly dark either winter or summer, for in winter the roads and country are all covered with snow, which renders every moving object distinctly visible. It is only about the time of "break-up" that wet weather and dark nights prevail. In the summer there is far more work done in the land and fields at night and in the morning than in the day time. In the

Digitized by Google

heat of the day they will often retire for a few hours into some cool grove or shady place, there to sit, sing, dance, or sleep, as they please—all quite merry, cheerful, and apparently contented and happy. Every person that has travelled in the interior of Russia, will have seen here and there barns or buildings of enormous size and dimensions. On inquiry, I was informed they were government stores, or magazines, filled with grain, which was regularly changed every year (or every second year, I forget which), the old taken out to use, and the barns refilled with new. These great store houses, I was told, were erected in all parts of the interior of this vast empire, and always kept full of grain for black bread, ready I suppose in case of failure of crops or famine. The quantity of grain always thus in store, I was informed, was not far short of being equal to one year's crop. Whether all or any of this information was correct or not I cannot say; such buildings, however, as I mention are visible to all.

LETTER XXIII.

A gentleman who has just arrived from the interior of Russia, called upon me the other day; from whom I learned that a great stride (whether in advance or retrogression I do not profess to say) is now taking place in the hand weaving of the peasants of Russia, in the villages about where he was residing. The improvement which he speaks of, and which, he thinks, is likely to become general, is this, viz., of entirely dispensing with the picking stick. They now take the shuttle in their right hand, pitch it across, and catch it in the left; then do the same with the left hand, and catch it in the right: thus the hand that has just thrown the shuttle is always ready and at liberty to knock up the sleys. By this new improvement they are enabled to turn off a greater amount of work, and keep within proper limits their former fugitive shuttle.

Respecting the prospects of the war, he says, that in the interior of Russia the people are quite elated, and at every engagement rejoice at the never-failing success of their arms, and the continual defeat and disasters of their enemies. Their astonishment appears to be very great at the impudence and arrogance of England, France, and Turkey, in attempting

Digitized by Google

to contend with a power which (as they say) annihilated the French and some half-dozen nations combined with it. Foreigners who are leaving Russia, after much trouble, think themselves fortunate if they succeed in getting 2s. 8d. instead of 3s. 2d. for a rouble in exchanging their money.

In my last I was speaking about the produce of Russia, viz., the grain for their black bread. The land seems particularly adapted to the growth of this sort of grain, and so extensively is it cultivated, and so plentiful is the supply, that I have actually seen large portions remain uncut, and left to perish in the snows. This, too, in a country that carries with its name so much of destitution, poverty, and want. In fact, they are a people of such curious extremes, that it is very difficult to describe them. Although they are such noted thieves, in some things they seem to have all things common. I have seen a person, when he thought his crop of grain was short and scanty, go round quite leisurely and unceremoniously examining the crops of his neighbours, till he came to one which he considered a very good full crop, when he would forthwith help himself to as much as he thought would make up his own deficiency; and if, while in the act of cutting it, the owner should pass that way, the only remark he would make would be to ask him if he was rather short this year; for probably it might be his turn next year to do the same by him, or some other of his neighbours. Again, although the habits, customs, and dress of the Russian (for you must remember no man in the interior of Russia, except foreigners and barons, wear their shirts inside their trousers) render them such outlandish, savage-looking beings, you will never see one meet a foreigner without uncovering his head some twenty yards before meeting, and remain uncovered for the same distance after passing: a strange mixture, I think, of civilization and barbarism. Again, through so extremely dirty in every other respect, we never knew a Russian omit his weekly body bath; but this, I suppose, is enjoined by his religion, and, indeed, I often thought it was the very thing that kept the Russian race from becoming extinct through dirt and filth. So strictly do their priests inquire after this point, that I used to think the Emperor had an idea of this sort too. However, the people, the country, and all belonging to it, may truly be termed a collection of extremes. I give you an in-

Digitized by Google

stance in religion. This gentleman who has come from there says that four merchants in Moscow had given up their attendance at church, and begun to meet together to worship God regularly in one of their own houses and in their own way. They were Russian merchants, and still continued to worship according to the Greek faith, with the exception of having a priest. One night, however, they were called out of bed at midnight, about the same hour, and carried away from their respective homes, but where to, or where they are, nobody knows; and very few venture to inquire. They had never been heard of since, when he left. A very expeditious mode this, of convincing sceptics. In fact, there is nothing done by halves; their very climate is in two extremes, and everything else equally as much so. On the subject of land produce, I may mention the price of a few articles of general consumption. The best white Muscovy flour is from 25 to 30 shillings a pack. All garden vegetables are cheaper than in England. Cucumbers, which the people eat the same as apples, can be had for next to nothing. Melons and other such fruit grow in great abundance in the open garden; peas, also, are pretty extensively cultivated. The growing of corn, that is "oats," is general, but it is for the use of cattle; I never saw any meal in Russia. Apples are plentiful and cheap, but pears scarce and dear. Cabbages are abundant, and almost every family pickles a few cart loads for winter use. Potatoes are not so large as ours, but quite plentiful. Indeed, of so little value is land, that if you wish to grow your potatoes you have only to select out a piece somewhere and plant them; nobody will ask you what you are about. It ought to be observed, however, that all these things are six or seven times as dear in Moscow or Petersburg; coffee is 1s. 6d. per lb.; tea, 6s.; lump sugar, 1s.; but these are things not used by common people. Brown sugar I never saw, but honey being very plentiful, it can be made to answer the same purpose in almost all cases. The best clean honey is 6d. per lb., but there is plenty to sell at 3d. The best black bread can be bought at a farthing per lb. This will help to explain the possibility of a soldier living on his pay, 1½d. or 2d. per day; for as I said before, their staple food is black bread and water. Cattle, also, are very cheap. The best flesh-meat we bought at 1½d. per lb., but the cattle are not so large, or so fat, as in England.

Digitized by Google

I kept a cow for our own use, to serve us with milk. I bought it for 30s., and when I came off sold it for 15s. Their fowls are very large and excellent; a fine fat goose is got for 13d. or 14d., a fat duck for 11d. or a 1s., a hen for 10d., and a chicken for about 7d. Riding is very cheap. Horses are numerous, but they are much less than English horses, and they seem to possess the same powers of endurance and patience, in privation and suffering, as the people; allow them their own trot and they will travel night and day for any length of time on very course food, and with short batings. In travelling, it is a national custom to fix to the horse's head a bell. As regards the riding of horses bare-backed, one custom serves both male and female, except in towns and fashionable circles. The first time I saw two or three women come galloping by, mounted in exactly the same position as a man, I could scarcely believe my own eyes, but I was informed it was their common practice.

In stating the value and price of the various articles in this letter, I do not know that they will agree with those in all other parts of the interior, but they may do; I merely copy them now, as I took them at the time I bought them, at the place where I resided. I may also say I never saw any flour in England that would stand comparison with the best fine Muscovy flour of Russia, nor do I believe there are better bakers in the world than those in Moscow.

LETTER XXIV.

The Russian summer being so short, it often happens that some of the grain has to be got in before it is sufficiently ripe, in which case, as I remarked to one of the owners much difficulty would be experienced in thrashing to separate the husk from the grain; but he replied they would soon ripen it, after getting it home and into the shed. I was curious to learn this process of bringing their unripe grain to perfection, and wondered what substitute they would have for the sun. I therefore enquired when this process would be going on, and noted down the time, and did not fail to attend when it arrived. The method or process is this:—Each family has what they call a kiln of one, two, or three floors, but without any boards; it is merely formed of small trees laid across,

Digitized by Google

not quite touching each other. Upon every floor is spread a quantity of unripe grain; then down in the ground a fire is made. As the building on all sides is made close and thick with straw and long grass between the timbers which form the walls, and many apertures are left in different parts of the roof, the smoke of the fire at the bottom continually fills the place, is regularly ascending through all portions of the grain, and finally escapes at the top. The fire is kept up in such a way, and by such fuel, as will cause the most possible smoke. After the grain has thus been sufficiently heated, it is fetched out and thrashed by the family whilst it is crisp and hot. Then another kiln full is smoked and heated ready for the flail, and so on till all is done. By this means the grain and husks separate quite freely, and with very little labour. When I witnessed this operation it at once enlightened me as to the cause of so many fires taking place, and so many villages being laid in ashes; and so completely does the devouring element do its work amongst those houses of straw and timber, that not one is left standing. And so thoroughly built of wood are the Russian houses in the interior, that no matter how extensive the village may have been previous to the fire, you might as well seek for a politician amongst its inhabitants, as for a brick or stone in the ruins. I think the Russians must be great fatalists, for, when a village has caught fire, instead of the inhabitants using proper exertions to extinguish it, or prevent its spreading, they will all collect together to perform their prayers and ceremonies, and stand calmly looking on and watching its progress, and repeating their old maxim, "*Boga znia Lutchy*" (God knows best.) Those fires about the time of thrashing, kilning, and smoking (which last operation, I think, must have a tendency to render the grain still blacker), are of frequent occurrence; and although we had no newspaper to give us details of such fires, we often saw the sky illuminated at night, in first one and then another direction, which was explained to be from villages on fire. As regards English newspapers, the system is as follows;—there is a list of all newspapers allowed to circulate in Russia, published once a year. Each nation has the name of its newspaper printed in its own language (I mean all such as are allowed to circulate), as France, England, Germany, and under each head or nation are printed the names of all papers belonging to such nation,

Digitized by Google

each in its own language. Foreigners purchase these lists, and select the papers they intend to take for the next year, which they must pay for a year in advance, and give the order beforehand. Some heavy duty, I suppose, must be put on somewhere, as the cost of an English newspaper is very considerable; but what renders the system still more vexatious and annoying is that they seldom come to hand without two or three columns being entirely defaced, the marks of the handiwork of Russian government officials; and so expert are they, that they can completely erase the print on one side without injury to the other. I suppose this must be done with sandpaper, or something similar: at all events, certain political views and opinions, and all other things which they don't want to be learned or read in Russia, are all rubbed out before they are forwarded from St. Petersburg into the interior. I have seen *Punch* so much disfigured, that the owner has not had as much reading left as the breadth of his hand for his money.

As I promised in a former letter, I will now give a few brief remarks on Siberia and the transports to that place. What I shall say is as I had it from a respectable Russian tradesman. I asked him the meaning of the various gangs I had seen pass through the town at certain times; all being chained together, with guards on each side and behind, with drawn bayonets. He told me they were destined, and on their way, to Siberia, as exiles or transports; some for murder, some for political crimes, and others for sacrilege, &c. He told me those guards would conduct them out of the inhabited part of Russia, and put them on the road to Siberia, then loose off their chains and return, leaving the exiles to go forward themselves. The distance to Siberia is such, that they have to travel weeks and months on bread and water only. I naturally enquired what prevented them from running away? He replied, nothing at all, only that to turn off to the right or left would be certain death, either from starvation or the numerous wolves and bears. To turn back in the convict dress would, perhaps, end in death by the knout, as they would most assuredly be detected; for no person durst allow food and shelter to any other person without a passport properly made out and signed by the different government officials. So that there is no way but to keep going on, fol-

Digitized by Google

lowing the marked out road to Siberia. On this road there are stations, at equal distances, to supply black bread and water, with a night's lodgings, and a breakfast next morning. So that if they travel a certain number of miles each day, they will be sure to find food and lodgings at night. However, there is no compulsion; they may have their own time in going, only if they fail to make the proper distance, at the next station they are minus one day's food. At the completion of their journey they are sent down into the metal pits, never again to see daylight. This individual told me that numbers had been known to turn off the road, and choose rather to die of starvation than go forward to this most horrible place, He told me there were many exceptions to this method of travelling to Siberia. Persons of distinction, whom the Emperor was anxious should reach the pits, and of whom he was desirous of having a proper account, were sent in gangs and guarded all the way. But respecting the common people exiled to this place, I suppose it is all the same to the Emperor whether they go forward or turn off to die in the woods and desert plains.

LETTER XXV.

There are one or two other rather singular customs prevalent in Russia, and which I think I have not named. First I may mention that of the annual blessing. Once a year the priest comes round to bless, sprinkle water, and pray over the people, the machinery, the buildings, the cattle, and the produce of the proprietors. As they go round, sprinkling the water, they continually repeat certain prayers for the prosperity of the baron; for the preservation from fire and other accidents of the buildings and outhouses; for a rich increase of cattle, produce, and other necessaries; and, inside the mill, for the well-working of the engine and the machinery in general. But English foremen, who have generally more faith in the rollers and other parts of the machinery, which have to come in immediate contact with the cotton, being kept dry and warm, than in the sprinkling of water and the blessing, never fail to request, through the Russian overlooker, that the priest may let his water and blessing fall more particularly on those parts of the machinery where a little wet or damp does not so much

Digitized by Google

matter; and thus, by the overlooker pointing out to the priest those parts, as standing more especially in need of his blessing, the inconvenience and loss of work attendant upon the yearly blessing, are mostly obviated. At the completion of the ceremony, however, the priest always expects presents from the Englishmen and the baron, with a good dinner and plenty of *vadkey* (whiskey) after it.

Then another strange sort of custom is their Easter kiss. At this time all people, men and women salute each other with a kiss (purely religious). I suppose this is a token of a general forgiveness for all and everything that may have taken place during the past year, and to indicate that they are now on the most intimate terms of religious friendship and church fellowship. They do not confine this yearly salutation, to people of their own church and nation only, for they are particularly anxious to exchange the kiss with English men and women. The first Easter Sunday I was in Russia, two or three Russians presented themselves at our door. On inquiring their errand, their answer was *mozhna patzoloy* (may we kiss). I looked at them and their great long beards, which, by the bye, did not appear to be over clean and tidy, and which further increased my desire to evade this ceremony; so I told them, through an interpreter, that it was not a custom in my country, and that, if it would be no offence to them, I would beg to be excused. They only smiled at my objections, and still further pressed the necessity. I too, in joke and good humour, told them, I should have no objections to exchange this compliment with their wives. To my great surprise, this seemed to give satisfaction; for they immediately put on their caps and withdrew, and presently their wives arrived on the same errand. Having now no way of escape left, and the inclination in this case to avoid it certainly somewhat lessened, the ceremony was gone through. But truly, there is in this religious salutation, something really grand and Christian like. To see the greatest baron doff his hat and kiss the humblest slave on his estate, and the wealthiest ladies unveil their faces and kiss the lowest servant on their premises, or the meanest beggar in the way, and this with the most sincere and religious feeling—to see this, I could not help thinking it something worthy of example. It is not only a strange but touching sight to see at this time of the year the church-yard filled with people—strangers from different

Digitized by Google

localities, rich and poor in one general throng, all eager to pay this national mark of general forgiveness. At certain times the priests go round to all their parishioners in the way of begging. Those in towns are generally presented with money, more or less, according to the ability of the party; but the priests in the interior receive small portions of produce, and other things, from their parishioners; and, although it is entirely voluntary, they all seem quite willing to give. The reason why they give land produce, is because there is scarcely any circulation of money in many parts of the interior; and although money has been in circulation for about 465 years (according to history, being first coined in 1389, at Novgorod, in the reign of Basil the 2nd), I believe it would be possible to find localities which the currency has never reached.

The Russian substitute for the cradle is an amusing contrivance. They have a long pole or young tree of tolerable length, and very slender; the thick end of which they fix to the timbers which form the walls of their houses, and which project out in a slanting position till the small end of the tree is about three or four feet from the ground, and is always made to reach into some convenient place in that part of the shed in which they reckon to live. Then, with a rope or withes, they tie to this smaller end a basket containing the bed, (generally hay with a covering of some sort) for the infant; sometimes the end of the pole may be six feet from the ground, then the height of the basket is regulated by the rope. The infant is put in, and by touching the end of the pole it is set in motion, and made to vibrate up and down; and when the vibration or swing is near ceasing, they give it another touch, humming or singing a song, which in English is as near as possible the following:—

Sleep, O sleep, happy little child,
Thy own dear papa, is Nicoli the Great.

On the subject of infancy much might be said. As far as my knowledge goes there is no check upon, but every encouragement to, illegitimacy; for I believe nine-tenths of such children become the property of the Emperor, by being sent to the government hospital at Moscow. Every mother has the choice whether she keeps or sends to the hospital her offspring. Thousands of children thus become the property of the Emperor; for when they go there to be nursed and brought up,

Digitized by Google

they are at once the property of the crown. Although this is a direct loss to the baron who owns the mother, he is not allowed to offer any obstacle if she chooses to send them. At this place, however, they are much better nursed and cared for (as I have heard) than they would have been at home. Those who show signs of superior intellect are tutored for government officials, and other situations—those not needed in the Emperor's immediate service may get their living as they please, and as best they can.

LETTER XXVI.

As St. Petersburg and Moscow have been, and are likely to be so much before the public, a few brief remarks from me will suffice. Moscow, I must confess, is an interesting place, about which, with its inhabitants, any person who has lived there might write a dozen letters, and then conclude with the "Queen of Sheba," that half had not been told. Had I to live in one place or the other, give me Moscow a thousand times over before St. Petersburg. Certainly the modern capital is a fine, rich, gay, fashionable, business-like, trafficking, London-looking city; but Moscow, with its clear atmosphere, bright sky, crystal water fountains, and its ancient bearded inhabitants, for me. Here I may safely say you can get the best cup of tea and the best bread in the world; and their flour is of the finest description. The tea (which I suppose is brought direct from China over land) is of the richest flavour, and they well know how to prepare both. Their public-houses (as we should call them) are on a scale some half-dozen times as large as ours, and at every market and every pastime well filled with customers. But here forty-nine out of every fifty sit each with his little tea-pot, cup and saucer, smoking his tobacco with a pipe whose shank is some four yards long, and made of wood. Several slaves are employed in each room to light the pipes of the customers; for it is out of the question for a man to light his own pipe, when he cannot reach half way down the shank, for it must be a steady hand indeed that can place the shank end in his mouth and keep the pipe head to a candle at such a distance, until it is lighted. In looking into the bar, as we should call it, you will see hundreds—I had nearly said thousands—of tea-pots. I sometimes thought that Moscow had

Digitized by Google

as many tea-pots as it had soldiers; and a public-house may often be distinguished by the sign of the tea-kettle over the door. It was at one of these places where I fell into company with a number of Cossacks belonging to a troop then stationed in the town. We conversed together until our tea-pots had been emptied and refilled several times. The conversation was curious, pleasant, and very entertaining; many of their answers and statements I noted down. When asked if they were real Cossacks, they answered with a proud air, that they were, and in proof of which they shewed us how they could use the lance. They told us they were fond of the English people; but they appeared to despise the French. They told us that although the English people had no true religion, they believed they had more wit and cunning than the French, or any other people except the Russians. We asked what reason they had for thinkiug so; and their answer was, because, amongst the dead in the Russian campaign very few English could be found, for they had too much sense to be persuaded to take part in invading Russia. They told us how they should like to see England; but could not bear the idea of living there; and they asked us if we had no fear in living in England. When we asked why, they said some of their priests told them that England was only a piece of land like a finger end, just sticking out above the sea, and which might be overflowed or covered any night when there might be an extraordinary rough sea, which catastrophe they considered must at some time happen.

LETTER XXVII.

In conclusion, I will mention a few things connected with the very interesting city of Moscow, which may be worthy of a visit, should any of the readers of these letters ever travel so far. First, the Kremlin, with its numerous churches and gilded domes, from the inside of which the shrill shriek of the hawk pierces your ears. We were conducted through numerous buildings and apartments. We were shown the room where Napoleon took up his quarters. It was in this room where he tried in vain to close his eyes for sleep. In this room he addressed his generals, congratulating them on the conquering of Russia, then being in possession of the idol of his heart,

Digitized by Google

this ancient palace of the Czars. In this room—or rather from this room—he earnestly petitioned Alexander for negotiation, but in vain. In this room he wrote to Kutusoff to ask if he would forward another letter to the Emperor. In this room he received Kutusoff's short reply, that he would do so providing the word peace, or proposals indicative of such, was not in the letter. To another attempt at an armistice, Kutusoff replied that if Napoleon had nothing to say on any other subject, he must cease from further communication; for it was no time now, and was out of all possibility, to talk about peace, which said Kutusoff, "can never be named while a foreigner remains within the frontier, much less with his letters dated from the Kremlin." From one of the windows of this room Napoleon stood pensively gazing on the burning city, and from it the very heat of the city and the approaching flames soon forced him to depart. We were shown the bye-road by which he thought to escape from the Kremlin unobserved, but this was as great a failure as the attempt to negotiate; for the flames burst out on both sides of the street, and by their frightful glare rendered his every movement quite conspicuous; in fact, we had it on the spot, the flames pursued him down the street, and very narrow indeed was his escape. I have many notes on this head which I must pass over. In the Kremlin are the crowns and other trophies taken in the wars from Poland and other nations and peoples. The gardens of the Kremlin are a beautiful sight; but the whole of the Kremlin and its connections are now more modernly built than before the conflagration of 1812. The steeple or column of Ivan Veliki, which towers up far above anything on the hill of the Kremlin, indeed far higher than anything else in Moscow, is a fine sight. I ascended to its very summit, where my name, in English, will be found cut in the wood railing. From the top of this tower you have a view of Moscow and its suburbs, which is captivating. The country being flat, and the atmosphere always clear, the view from this place is worth anything. The whole of Moscow, as it were, is at your feet. You look on a painted city, the houses being of every colour. From the top of this tower you may trace the road by which Napoleon entered the city. Looking down at your feet you have the gold-glittering cupolas of the churches of the Kremlin, all of which have four or five and some sixteen. Whoever visits Moscow should

Digitized by Google

never return without ascending to the very top of this tower, which is built on the hill of the Kremlin. From this place they have almost every object in Moscow shown and explained to them — the Great Bazaar, the Great Palace, the Little Palace, the River Moskva, the Queen's Gardens, Alexander's Church, the Chinese Town, the Virgin's Convent, the White Town, the gardens of the Princess Galitzin, on the banks of the Moskva, and the Miraculous Convent, with the Alexander Gardens, the particulars of all of which I must pass over. The strong wall by which all these are surrounded is a great curiosity. It has many gates or entrances, the most important of which by far is the "Spass Vorota" (Porch or Gate of the Redeemer) which no man ever entered without uncovering his head, not even the emperor himself. Guards are stationed here day and night to see that this ancient practice is strictly observed. A lamp also burns day and night, before an image of the Virgin, and one before the image of the Saviour. At this gate they tell you many miracles have been wrought. They have a tradition that formerly, when the native Russians took shelter in the Kremlin, the pursuing Tartars were thrown into confusion by thick clouds enveloping this miraculous entrance. The French also (whom they call sacrilegious soldiers) tried to remove the image above this sacred gateway, but every plan to get at it failed. They then brought a cannon, but it would not explode, They then pointed the cannon at the image, and built a great fire under and over the touch-hole, when the cannon burst, killing a number of the French soldiers, but leaving the image entire and unharmed. No dogs are allowed to pass through this holy gateway. In Moscow there are markets in almost every part of the city, the principal of which is in that part which the English would call the bazaar. Here are the bearded Jewish money-changers, with their cart loads of coin before them; here may be seen merchants from, I believe, every part of the world, each in his own peculiar costume and armed in the fashion of his country. A few miles from Moscow there are other places of resort and amusement which might be noticed. I might notice the absence of women waiters at all the public-houses, &c., in the city of Moscow; neither can a woman waiter be seen at any of the stations between St. Petersburg and Moscow; I thought this the more surprising since it is nearly all cup-and-saucer

Digitized by Google

work. When I returned from Moscow last time, the railway was in operation, of which I availed myself, and during the journey to St. Petersburg noted down many incidents. They travel day and night, and nobody seems to be in a hurry. At every station nearly, they stop long enough to allow you to get out, walk about, and smoke a cigar. The carriages and line are, I think, on the American plan, and very nice travelling.

When we arrived at Petersburg we took ship as soon as conveniently we could, and set sail for Old England; and as regards myself, although I was leaving an excellent situation, and as good a master as a man could wish, I felt overjoyed when the sailors shouted out "Grimsby Head."

Galt, Kerruish, & Gent, Printers, 28, New Cannon-street, Manchester.

Digitized by Google

(2)

Skizze

von

Rußland.

Vienna.

1796.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Katharina die Zweyte.

Dieſe Monarchinn gehört zu den Perſonen von mittlerer Gröſſe. Sie iſt ſtark an Bruſt und Körper, hat groſſe blaue Augen und ein etwas langes Kinn. In einem Alter von 67 Jahren (Sie iſt den 21. April 1729. geboren) erwartet Niemand jugendliche Schönheit. Man ſieht es Ihr aber an, daß Sie es wirklich geweſen ſey. Augenzeugen Ihrer jüngern Jahre und die Gemälde, die von Ihr, beſonders als Großfürſtinn, gemacht wurden, bezeugen es.

Digitized by Google

Ihr Auge ist groß und blau, nichts weniger als unbeseelt und ohne Ausdruck, vielmehr lebhaft und durchdringend bei aller dessen Sanftheit. Ihre Wangen sind durch Schminke hochroth gefärbt. Sie thut dieses dem Geiste der Nation gemäß, indem sich fast alle weibliche Personen in Petersburg bis auf die Dienstmägde schminken. Ihr Blick enthält Würde und Herablassung; Ihr ganzer Anstand erweckt Hochachtung und Ehrerbietung.

Ihre Leidenschaften sind in ihren jugendlichen Jahren lebhaft, oft feurig bis zur Heftigkeit gewesen. Selbst das Alter, das andere gewöhnliche Menschen abzustumpfen pflegt, hat auf Sie nur wenig Einfluß gezeigt. Zum Glück der Nation, die Sie beherrscht, war mit den starken Leidenschaften ihres Temperaments immer wahres Wohlwollen gegen die Nation verbunden.

Ihr Verstand ist Einsichtsvoll, frey von vielen Vorurtheilen Ihres Geschlechts und Standes; Ihre Beurtheilungskraft ist stark, und wird selten von selber hintergangen.

Von

Digitized by Google

Von Ihrem Muthe und Festigkeit der Seele hat Sie in Ihrem Leben hinlängliche Beweise an den Tag gelegt. Die Geschichte Ihrer Thronbesteigung und Befestigung desselben, das Betragen bei dem Aufruhr eines Mirowitsch, und nachher eines Pukatschew, ihre männlichen Entschlüsse in dem doppelten Kriege wider die Türken, sind eben so bekannte Sachen, als die Beweise, die Sie von ihren Einsichten abgeleget hat, da Sie die Instruktion zu einer neuen Gesetzbuchs-Kommission, und viele andere Schriften selbst verfertigt hat.

Ihre Kleidung ist in Absicht des Zuschnitts im allgemeinen genommen, nach der Nationaltracht der Russinnen eingerichtet; doch hat Sie dieselbe in einigen Stücken, vorzüglich an den Aermeln etwas geändert. Ein langes Kleid, das sich von der Brust bis an die Füsse erstreckt, und Aermel bis an die Knöchel der Hand hat, ist ihre gewöhnliche Tracht.

Die Aermel haben besonders nach der Hand zu, unzählige Falten, dabei sind sie enge, und fest anpassend. Ueber diesen Leibrock trägt Sie

ein

Digitized by Google

ein anderes freyfliegendes Gewand ohne Aermel. Beide Kleider sind von verschiedenen Farben. Da, wo die Arme durch des Oberkleides Armlöcher durchgesteckt sind, liegen beide Kleider sehr genau aufeinander, so, daß diese asiatische Tracht, die mit den türkischen Mannskleidern Aehnlichkeit hat, nichts weniger als unangenehm ausfällt, vielmehr giebt sie ihrem ansehnlichen Wuchse Grazie und Majestät.

Ihre Frisur ist gewöhnlich ganz niedrig, etwa drey fingerbreit hoch, und im Rücken hängen einige geflochtene Zöpfe frey herunter. Unter einem reichen Brustschmucke von Brillanten tragt Sie einige Ordensbänder, die über die Schulter nach der andern Hüfte zu herabhängen. Sowohl vom Andreas- als auch vom Georgsorden trägt Sie, als Großmeisterinn, die Ordens-Kreuze auf der Brust an einer goldenen mit Diamanten besetzten Kette. An den **Courtagen** tragt Sie, wie unten gemeldet werden wird, auf der niedrigen Frisur eine kleine mit Brillanten besetzte Krone.

Ur-

Digitized by Google

Ursprung der Stadt St. Petersburg.

Nach der glücklichen Eroberung von der schwedischen Provinz Ingermanland, wodurch Peter I. sein Gebiet bis an die Ostsee ausgebreitet sah, konnte er seine herrschende Neigung zum Seewesen besser als bisher befriedigen. Als er daselbst die feste Stadt Nyenschantz, an der Newa, eingenommen hatte, fand er die Gegend zur Schifffahrt und Handlung in der Ostsee so bequem, daß er sich entschloß, eine Stadt und Festung am Ausflusse der Newa in den finnischen Meerbusen anzulegen. Der Anfang dazu wurde sogleich 1703. gemacht, und dieser Stadt der Name, St. Petersburg ertheilt, weil er, der Zaar, den Namen des Apostel Petrus führte.

Der

Digitized by Google

Der Boden, auf welchem sie zu stehen kam, war sehr sumpfig und unfruchtbar, kaum mit einigen schlechten Fischerhütten bedeckt; wurde aber durch Erde und Steine erhöht und verbessert. Eigentlich bekam sie ihren Sitz, ohngefähr wie Venedig, auf verschiedenen Inseln, welche durch die Arme der Newa hervorgebracht wurden, und hat auch so wenig Thore, als die genannte Stadt.

Sie sollte zuerst hauptsächlich nur einen Waffenplatz abgeben, der alle nöthige Kriegsbedürfnisse enthielte, deren man gegen die benachbarten Schweden in Liefland und Finnland benöthigt wäre. Daher bestand sie in den ersten sechs Jahren nur aus hölzernen Gebäuden und einem schlechten Erdwalle. Aber nach der Schlacht bei Pultawa, da Peter Riga und das übrige Liefland auf der einen Seite, auf der andern aber Wiburg und Kexholm in Finnland sich unterworfen, und nunmehr Hofnung hatte, seine neue Stadt behaupten zu können, ließ er in derselben steinerne Gebäude aufführen, und sie dauerhafter befestigen. Er verlegte den Staatsrath und andere Regierungsgesellschaften dahin, befahl den Vornehmsten russischen Edelleuten sich daselbst Häuser zu erbauen,

und

Digitized by Google

und erhob also diese Stadt nach und nach zur neuen Hauptstadt seines Reichs. Moskau, welches bis dahin diesen Rang gehabt hatte, schickte sich freylich seiner Lage nach, beinahe in der Mitte des Reichs, weit mehr zur Hauptstadt desselben, als St. Petersburg, gegen dessen westliches Ende hin; das letztere hingegen schien wegen der Nachbarschaft der Ostsee, und wegen der leichtern Verbindung mit den übrigen europäischen Fürsten diesen Vorzug zu verdienen. Er machte es bereits zu einer grossen und prächtigen Stadt; nach seinen Zeiten ist es noch mehr geworden; und ohngeachtet der ganze Raum, welchen die Stadt einzunehmen fähig ist, noch nicht bebaut ist, auch hie und da neben Palläſten noch geringe Häuser stehen, so gehört sie doch schon zu den schönsten Städten in Europa, die erst seit der Regierung Katharina der II. an schönen Gebäuden um vieles zugenommen hat.

Digitized by Google

Petersburg Sitten, und russische Lebensart überhaupt.

Kurzsichtigkeit würde es verrathen, wenn jemand alle Einwohner einer solchen Stadt, wie diese ist, nach einerlei Maaßstabe beurtheilen zu können sich beikommen ließe. Nicht blos Klima und Religion, sondern auch Stand und Beschäftigung erzeugen Verschiedenheiten in den Sitten. Am sichersten geht man, wenn man die hiesigen Einwohner in drey Klassen theilt. Entweder sind es vornehme Nationalen, oder Ausländer, oder gemeine Russen. Jede dieser drey Arten hat hier in ihrem Charakter etwas Eigenthümliches.

Der vornehme Russe ist ausschweifend, leichtsinnig, wie der Franzose, höflich, weniger standhaft,

Digitized by Google

haſt, als der gemeine Ruſſe; was er heute anfängt, will er morgen fertig ſehen, und nach wenigen Tagen iſt er deſſen überdrüſſig. Hieraus laſſen ſich die vielen hitzig angefangenen, mit Uebereilung ausgeführten, und nachher vernachläſſigten Werke der Baukunſt erklären.

Mehr Stätigkeit im Charakter hat der gemeine Mann. Er, der ſtets zum Gehorchen gewöhnt iſt, darf ſeinen Willen nicht ſchnell verändern. Der gemeine Mann iſt treu gegen ſeinen Herrn, dienſtfertig gegen eine Kleinigkeit, aber auch ſtets geneigt, den Ausländer, der ſo manche Vorzüge vor ihm genießt, zu bevortheilen. Hierzu iſt er äuſſerſt erfinderiſch, er ahmet alles nach, verfertiget allerlei Kunſtſachen und Handwerkswaaren, verſtehet es, ſelben ein gefälliges Anſehn zu geben, denen es aber vielmal an der Dauer fehlt. Beim Verkauf dieſer Sachen fodert er vom Ausländer, troz dem Juden, zweymal ſo viel, als er es wirklich hindan läßt.

Unter den In- und Ausländern muß man mit allem Rechte vorzüglich Gaſtfreyheit rühmen. Ein Fremder kann hier lange Zeit leben, ohne einmal

in

Digitized by Google

in seinem Gasthause zu speisen, wenn er nur eine Bekanntschaft hat. Bei den meisten Kaufleuten ist die Einrichtung getroffen, daß wöchentlich ein oder zwey Tage grosse Tischgesellschaft gehalten wird. Besucht man Jemanden zum erstenmal, so bittet er sich gleich die Ehre aus, auf den in seinem Hause eingeführten Gasttage zum Mittagessen, mit der Erklärung: man möge es sich, so lange man in Petersburg sich aufzuhalten gedenke, jedesmal diesen Tag bei ihm gefallen lassen. Derjenige, welcher keine andere Addressen mitgebracht hat, macht dann bei dem ersten Mittagmahl mehrere Bekanntschaften, welche ihn, wenn er einigermassen Lebensart besitzt, auf ihre bestimmten Tage bei sich einladen. Ja, es giebt sehr viele Fremde, die mit einem ihrer Bekannten zu ganz unbekannten Personen zum Mittagessen mitgenommen werden, allwo solcher nach einem, aus wenigen Worten bestehenden Komplimente, seinen Degen ablegt, sich zu Tische setzt, und dann wie jeder Freund vom Hause die Vortheile des geselligen und gastfreyen Lebens genießt. Ein solches Betragen, das in Deutschland den Namen grober Zudringlichkeit und schmarozender Unverschämtheit erhalten würde, ist hier nichts weniger, als auf-

fal-

fallend, sondern gewöhnliche Sitte. Die Kaufleute machen vielen Aufwand, den sie zwar bei den mannichfaltigen Mitteln, viel zu verdienen, leicht machen können, der indessen doch der Ruin vieler Comptoirs geworden ist.

Wenn man unter den Deutschen, Franzosen und anderen Nationen dem Engländer vorzüglich, den meisten eigentlichen Charakter zuschreibt; so will man doch unter den in Petersburg Ansässigen dieser Nation bemerkt haben, daß er durch langen Umgang mit andern Personen seinen Charakter grösstentheils verloren habe. Er ist hier leichtsinnig und wankelmüthig, auch vielmal auf eine unenglische Art eigennützig. Ob sie gleich einen Theil einer besondern Strasse, den genannten Galeerenhof, inne haben, und mit den übrigen Ausländern eben nicht viele Gesellschaft halten, durch die sie ihr Nationelles hätten verlieren können, so scheint doch der Umgang mit vornehmen Russen die gedachte Metamorphose bewirkt zu haben.

Die Franzosen bleiben sich hier, so wie im übrigen Europa, völlig gleich. Das deutsche Cha-

mä-

Digitized by Google

mäleon, das sich zu allem umformt, spricht gut russisch, geht in die Badstube, und trinkt Brandwein, wie der Russe. Am sichtbarsten ist dies an den eigentlichen Kolonisten.

Der Russe in der Residenz ist nichts weniger, als Barbar, unwissend oder wild. Ehemals war dies zwar die Charakterschilderung, dazu noch Aberglauben und Trunkenheit Grundfarben hergaben. Jetzt haben sich die Sachen ganz geändert. Sind sie gleich nicht so kultivirt, wie Deutsche oder andere Völker in den Residenzen, so sind sie doch gewiß nicht solche Unmenschen, wie sie einige Reisebeschreiber geschildert haben. Leute von wenig Kenntnissen und vielen Vorurtheilen, wie dies der Fall bei der untersten Klasse des Volks ist, werden immer halsstörrig bleiben, und an alten Gewohnheiten festkleben. So gehorsam sie gegen ihre Erbherren sind, so wenig lassen sie sich ungerechterweise von Fremden drücken.

Im Umgange ist der gemeine Russe ernsthaft, ehrerbietig gegen Obere, voller Komplimente und Manieren gegen seines Gleichen, gutherzig gegen Hülfsbedürftige, heftig gegen Feinde; in den Lei-

den-

Digitized by Google

denschaften ist er brausend, und in der Rache rasend.

Die russischen Frauen, ohngeachtet sie von Natur gut gefärbt sind, mahlen sich ohne Unterschied. Die vornehmste Dame bis zur Dienstmagd trägt Weiß und Roth auf ihrem Gesichte, und meist in solcher Menge, daß nur wenige Männer zweifeln können, ob diese Farbe ein Werk der Natur, oder der Kunst sey. Ja, es geht so weit, daß, wenn man Weibspersonen in den Dienst nimmt, sie bei Bestimmung des Jahrgehalts gemeiniglich fragen, ob es mit oder ohne Schminke zu verstehen sey. Im Fall die Frau der Magd die Schminke nicht mit bestimmt, muß sie ihr etwas Gewisses dafür aussetzen. Schminke ist ein so nothwendiges Bedürfniß für das weibliche Geschlecht, als Wäsche und Kleidung.

Was die Lebensmittel des gemeinen Mannes betrift, so kann man durchaus nicht sagen, daß er schlecht lebt. Er hat gutes Brod, öfters Fleisch und Fische, gutes Bier und Brantwein, nebst einigen Gartenfrüchten. Auch leidet er nicht von der Kälte, dawider schützet ihn sein warmer

Schaaf-

Digitized by Google

Schaaf- oder Barannien-Pelz, seine gut geheizte Stube und seine mindere Empfindlichkeit bei rauher Luft. Selbst der Soldat bei seinem äußerst geringen Sold, lebt nach seiner Art gut. Die Grüze und Mehl, die er ausser dem guten Brod erhält, weis er auf eine ihm schmackhafte und mannichfaltige Weise zuzubereiten. Worinne soll also die Armuth und Dürftigkeit bestehen? Ein Land, daß an Lebensprodukten so reich, obgleich an Menschen und klingender Münze, in Betracht anderer Länder, so zu sagen, arm ist, kann nicht so geschildert werden, als ob die Nation am Hungertuche nage. Gesetzt, man wisse nichts von der grossen Viehzucht und reichen Getraide-Erndten, so sieht man es der Nation am Gesicht und Körper an, daß sie gut genähret ist. Vergleicht man die Ehsten und Letten mit den Russen, so fällt die Parallele immer zum Nachtheil der erstern aus.

Die Sitten in Absicht auf Ausschweifungen in der Liebe, sind hier so, wie man es von grossen Städten, wo ein zahlreiches Militär, viele Matrosen, und noch mehr Müssiggänger allerlei Art angetroffen werden, erwarten darf. Das heißt: man schweift hier sehr aus. Zwar lebt

das

das russische Mädchen ziemlich keusch, aber desto unkeuscher die Frau. Dieser Punkt scheint hier wenig Moralität zu haben. Man findet zwar nicht öffentlich privilegierte Tempel der Venus, aber desto mehr Privathäuser, wo Lustmädchen gehalten werden. Die Polizey sieht ihnen so lange durch die Finger, als die Gesundheit und der Beutel derer, die diese Häuser besuchen, nicht ärger in Gefahr kommen, als die Personen, die dahin gehen, selbst eingestehen. Sobald aber in Cytherens Schooße Krankheit oder spitzbübische Geldprellerey entdeckt wird, muß die Göttinn nach dem Lazareth oder Zuchthaus.

Die Kleidertracht des Vornehmen und des Mittelstandes ist nach französischem oder englischem Zuschnitte, und so wie in Wien und Berlin der Mode unterworfen. Die niedrige Volksklasse im Gegentheil hat ihre Nationalkleidung. Mannspersonen tragen einen braunen, grauen oder blauen langen Rock, einen Gürtel darüber, meist Stiefeln, oder statt deren die Füsse mit Tüchern umwickelt. Der gemeine Mann läßt den Bart wachsen, und streicht ihn öfters mit Wohlbehagen. Die Russinnen haben in ihrer Kleidung etwas Asia-

Digitized by Google

tisches. An den Hauben tragen sie statt Spitzen und Flor, angereihete Perlen oder Korallen. Wohlhabende haben selbst an ihren Röcken breite Falten, die von Perlen in allerley Mustern zusammen geschnüret sind. Das Dienstmädchen hat zum Kopfputz ein grosses seidenes oder leinenes Tuch. Dieses wird so um den Kopf gewunden, daß es von der darunter befindlichen Steifleinwand hoch emporstehet.

Digitized by Google

Russische Regierung.

Die russischen Monarchen sind an keine Gesetze gebunden. Es giebt hier nichts, das dem Parlement in England, den Konstitutionspunkten des deutschen Kaisers, u. s. w. gleich wäre. Die russisch-kaiserliche Gewalt hat in so fern Aehnlichkeit mit der willkührlichen Regierungsform asiatischer Staaten, das heißt: im ganzen Reiche giebt es kein Kollegium, daß durch die Wahl des Volks, oder durch alten Gebrauch, oder durch schriftliche Konkordaten, und dergleichen berechtigt wäre, das Betragen des Monarchen zu untersuchen, und seinen Ausschweifungen Gränzen zu setzen. Alles hängt von der Willkühr des Monarchen ab. Er ist, nächst Gott, der Gegenstand der National-Ehrfurcht. Der gemeine Russe braucht noch den Ausdruck: Gott und die Kaiserinn weis es! —

Digitized by Google

Despotische Regierungen sind immer Staatsveränderungen durch Rebellion unterworfen gewesen; deßhalb fürchteten sich die ehemaligen Regenten vor nichts so sehr, als vor Aufruhr und Verschwörungen gegen ihr Leben. Um diesen vorzubeugen, errichtete man in vorigen Zeiten eine Kanzlei der geheimen Inquisition. Kam jemand, selbst von dem geringsten Stande, und machte den andern verdächtig, so bedurfte es nicht viel Untersuchung, ihn zum ewigen Staatsgefangenen zu machen. Wenn der Beklagte die Beschuldigungen abläugnete, und die Kanzlei sonst keine Mittel, die Wahrheit zu entdecken, wußte, so wurde der Ankläger gefoltert; stand er die Tortur aus, so wurde dem oft unschuldig Angeklagten der kurze Prozeß gemacht, und zum Tode verurtheilt. Ein aus Uebereilung oder selbst in der Trunkenheit vielmal ausgestossenes freyes Urtheil von der Verfahrungsweise der Zaaren hat manchem sein Leben gekostet.

Obgleich jetzt dieses tumultuarische Verfahren von der Regierung verabscheuet wird, so wollte man doch zuweilen wissen, daß Personen gefänglich eingezogen würden, ohne daß man die Ursache bekannt machte.

Der

Digitized by Google

Der Wille des Monarchen wird durch nichts eingeschränkt, als durch eigenes Ehrgefühl; denn die zwey Punkte, die man vielleicht anführen könnte, sind für das Publikum etwas unwichtig. Die eine, eine alte Satzung, schreibt dem Monarchen vor, das Reich ungetheilt zu erhalten, und die zweyte, nämlich der letzte Wille Katharina der I., hat es für ihre Nachfolger im Reich zum Gesetze gemacht; daß derjenige, der sich nicht zur griechischen Kirche bekennt, oder der bereits einen königlichen Thron besitzt, vom russischen Throne ausgeschlossen seyn soll. Die Kaiserinn Elisabeth bestättigte diese Sätze, als Staatskonstitution. Deßhalb mußte Peter III. zur griechischen Kirche übertreten, und die ihm angebotene schwedische Krone ausschlagen.

Verschiedenemal haben russische vornehme Männer der Macht des Monarchen Gränze zu setzen gesucht. Bei dem Anfange der Regierung der Kaiserinn Anna, Wittwe des Herzogs von Curland, brachten es acht Mitglieder des hohen geheimen Raths dahin, daß Sie gewisse Bedingungen eingehen mußte. Allein sobald Sie auf dem Throne befestigt war, so zerriß Sie den von Ihr

un-

Digitized by Google

unterschriebenen Vergleich, und erklärte sämmtliche Bedingungen für Null und Nichtig. Diese Bedingungen waren nämlich folgende: „Sie wolle nach dem Gutbefinden des hohen geheimen Raths regieren; ohne dessen Einwilligung weder Krieg anfangen, noch Frieden schliessen, keine neue Auflagen machen, noch vornehme Aemter vergeben; kein Edelmann sollte hingerichtet, noch seine Güter eingezogen werden, wenn ihm nicht vorher der Prozeß gehörig gemacht worden wäre; die Krongüter sollten ohne Einwilligung dieses hohen geheimen Raths nicht veräussert werden können."—

Ohngeachtet die russischen Monarchen durch keine Gesetze gebunden werden, so ist doch die Regierung Katharina II. äusserst gelinde. Es ist nicht allein die geheime Inquisitions-Kanzley, deren oben gedacht worden, unter ihren Vorfahren aufgehoben worden, sondern ihre ganze Regierungs-Weise ist so, daß der Russe die ehemalige Strenge in die heilsamste Gelindigkeit verwandelt sieht. Kann Sie gleich die Sklaverey und alle davon unzertrennbare häßliche Folgen nicht abschaffen, weil die Rohheit der Nation ein solches Gut, wie die Freyheit ist, nicht genieſſen kann;

so

so leitet Sie es doch darauf ein, daß derselben Nachkommen den herrlichsten Sieg der Menschheit erleben können.

Die vorzüglichsten Mittel bestehen in der Errichtung öffentlicher Landesschulen, durch welche der gemeine Mann, ausser daß er viele nützliche Kenntnisse sammelt, für den Gebrauch des edlen und hohen Guts der Freyheit im Gegensatz sowohl von Sklaverey als ungebundener Ausgelassenheit, allmählig empfänglich gemacht wird, in der Ertheilung städtischer Privilegien, durch welche Handwerker und Künstler unterstützt, und deren Generation als freyere Menschen behandelt werden. So sind während dieser Regierung 249 neue Städte errichtet worden. Da dieser Umstand wegen den Privilegien äusserst wichtig, die derselben Bewohnern dadurch zufließen, so werden die glückseligen Abstämmlinge dieser Begünstigten einst der Nachwelt verkündigen, daß sie diese Glückseligkeit der weisen Monarchinn, Katharina der II. zu verdanken haben.

Rus-

Digitized by Google

Russische Ritterorden.

Deren sind sechs. Das Zeichen des ersten, des Andreas-Orden, welchen Peter der Grosse zu Ehren des russischen Schutz-Patrons, des Heil. Andreas stiftete, ist ein goldenes dunkelblau emaillirtes Kreuz, auf dessen einer Seite, der Heilige, auf der andern der Adler zu sehen ist.

Der Alexander-Newsky-Orden wurde von ebendemselben gestiftet. Das Zeichen ist ein roth emaillirtes Kreuz mit goldenem Adler, in der Mitte der Heilige zu Pferde.

Der Sankt Katharinen-Orden von eben demselben im Jahr 1714 gestiftet.

Der Sankt Annen-Orden, welcher 1735 in Hollstein gestiftet ist, dessen Besitz sich aber der Groß-

Digitized by Google

Großfürst Paul Petrowitsch, bei Abtretung dieses Landes an Dännemark, vorbehalten hat.

Der Kriegsorden des heiligen Georgs, dessen Zeichen ein viereckigter goldener Stern ist, in dessen Mitte der Nahmenszug des Heiligen mit der Umschrift steht: Für Kriegsdienste und Tapferkeit. — Wurde im Jahr 1770 zur Belohnung der Verdienste ausgezeichneter Militärpersonen ihrer Armeen von der jetzigen Kaiserin Katharina der II. gestiftet. Wie imgleichen auch

Der Wladimir-Orden, der im Jahr 1782 errichtet, und zur Belohnung verdienstvoller Staats-Beamten bestimmet ist, derselben sein Daseyn zu verdanken hat.

Rus-

Digitized by Google

Russische Ritterorden.

Deren sind sechs. Das Zeichen des ersten, des Andreas-Orden, welchen Peter der Grosse zu Ehren des russischen Schutz-Patrons, des Heil. Andreas stiftete, ist ein goldenes dunkelblau emaillirtes Kreuz, auf dessen einer Seite, der Heilige, auf der andern der Adler zu sehen ist.

Der Alexander-Newsky-Orden wurde von ebendemselben gestiftet. Das Zeichen ist ein roth emaillirtes Kreuz mit goldenem Adler, in der Mitte der Heilige zu Pferde.

Der Sankt Katharinen-Orden von eben demselben im Jahr 1714 gestiftet.

Der Sankt Annen-Orden, welcher 1735 in Hollstein gestiftet ist, dessen Besitz sich aber der

Groß-

Digitized by Google

Großfürst Paul Petrowitsch, bei Abtretung dieses Landes an Dännemark, vorbehalten hat.

Der Kriegsorden des heiligen Georgs, dessen Zeichen ein viereckigter goldener Stern ist, in dessen Mitte der Nahmenszug des Heiligen mit der Umschrift steht: Für Kriegsdienste und Tapferkeit. — Wurde im Jahr 1770 zur Belohnung der Verdienste ausgezeichneter Militärpersonen ihrer Armeen von der jetzigen Kaiserin Katharina der II. gestiftet. Wie imgleichen auch

Der Wladimir-Orden, der im Jahr 1782 errichtet, und zur Belohnung verdienstvoller Staats-Beamten bestimmet ist, derselben sein Daseyn zu verdanken hat.

Rus-

Digitized by Google

Russischer Courtag.

Alle Sonn- und Festtage ist bei Hofe öffentliche Cour, wobei die auswärtigen Minister und andere Fremde, die sich präsentiren lassen, zum Handkuß kommen. Sonntags nämlich nach zehn Uhr geht die Monarchinn in die Kirche, die sich in ihrem Schlosse befindet. Nach Endigung der Kirche, etwa gegen zwölf Uhr, kommt Sie in vollem Pompe, begleitet von ihrem Hofstaate durch eine Reihe von Zimmern in den Audienzsaal.

Jeder Fremde, der ordentlich gekleidet ist, einen Degen an der Seite und chapeau bas gehet, kann diesem seltenen Schauspiele beiwohnen. Ein Schauspiel, das wegen der Wichtigkeit der hier versammelten Personen, sämmtlicher auswärtiger Minister, der vornehmsten Triebräder des russischen Reichs, wegen der Menge von

Ster-

Digitized by Google

Sternen und Ordensbändern, Kriegs- und Civilpersonen, kurz: vieler Männer, die mehr oder weniger Einfluß auf die politischen Begebenheiten Europens, und einen Theil der andern Weltgegenden hatten und noch haben, dem Beobachter gewiß nicht uninteressant dünken kann. Ich will hievon eine kurze Schilderung beibringen:

So lange die Monarchinn in der Kirche verweilt, herrscht in dem Audienzsaal wegen des Zusammenflusses so vieler Personen ein grosses Geräusche. Leute fast von allen Nationen versammlen sich. Man spricht, und gehet auf und ab, dadurch ein beträchtliches Gewühle unter den Anwesenden verursacht wird. Plötzlich öfnet sich die Thüre, es heißt: Die Monarchinn kömmt! —

Sämmtliche auswärtige Minister, Envoyés, Chargés d'affaires, Residenten u. s. w. bilden sogleich eine Gasse, indem sie sich von der Thüre an, wo die Monarchin hereinkommen soll, in zwey Reihen stellen. Das vorhergehende Geräusche verwandelt sich nun in eine heilige Stille.

Ein

Digitized by Google

Ein Hofmarschall eröfnet den Zug der Monarchinn. Ihm folgen paarweise die Kammerherren, mehrere in russischen Diensten stehende Minister einzelner Dikasterien, und andere zum Hofe gehörige Personen. Unmittelbar vor der Kaiserin geht ihr General-Adjutant. Er führt einen Stock. Zwey oder drey Schritte nach diesem erscheint die Monarchinn in ihrer Majestät mit einer kleinen, stark mit Brillanten besetzten, Krone auf dem Haupt. Gleich hinter Ihr kömmt Ihr Kammerherr, und den Zug beschliessen die Hofdamen und Hoffräulein.

Beim Eintritt in den Saal bleibt Sie gewöhnlich stehen, und macht durch einige Verbeugungen des Körpers, so wie die Mannspersonen zu machen pflegen, sämmtlichen Anwesenden ihr Kompliment. Auch hierinn beobachtet sie die Landessitte, daß sie sich nicht auf solche Art neigt, wie sich Damen anderer Nationen zu neigen pflegen, sondern, daß sie nach Art der Russinnen den Obertheil des Körpers vorwärts beugt. Hierauf nähert sich Ihr einer nach dem andern von den zu beiden Seiten stehenden fremden Ministern. Sie reicht jedem die blosse Hand zum Küssen

dar,

Digitized by Google

dar, und spricht während dieses Vorganges mit diesem und jenem.

Nachdem diese und auch andere Fremde zum Handkuß gekommen sind, verweilt Sie nicht lange mehr. Ihr Zug geht in der Anfangs bemerkten Ordnung durch einige grosse Zimmer nach Ihrem Aufenthaltsort.

Der letzte Theil des Zuges, nämlich die Damen bleiben zum Theil in dem Courzimmer. Man bringt Erfrischungen, Liqueurs, Weine und Gebackenes, von welchen die Damen und Herrn nach Belieben genießen.

Alle Sonntäge wird des Abends bei Hofe der Regel nach, Bal paré, gehalten. Die Monarchin erscheint, wie bei der Cour, fast mit der nämlichen Begleitung. Die Zimmer sind meist noch gefüllter, als des Vormittags; sie sind auch glänzender wegen der vielen anwesenden vornehmen Damen. Die Menge vom kostbarem Schmuck macht die Bälle vielleicht zu den einzigen in ihrer Art.

Die

Digitized by Google

Die Monarchinn tanzt jetzt schon mehrere Jahre nicht mehr. Sie unterhält sich mit ihrer Familie, oder anderen durch Diskurse, spielt meist Whist, seltener aber Makao.

Re-

Digitized by Google

Religion der Russen.

Die Religion des Pöbels ist sich fast allenthalben gleich. Alte Meinungen und Gebräuche gelten mehr als Moralität. Diese sind die vorzüglichsten Ingredienzien derselben am Oroonoko, wie an der Newa.

Wer noch nicht vom russischen Gottesdienste unterrichtet ist, und ihn einmal mit ansieht, muß leicht auf den Gedanken kommen, daß die Hauptsache desselben in folgenden drey Stücken bestehe:

1mo. Daß man die beyden Worte **Gospodi pomiiui** fertig aussprechen;

2do. Eine Menge Kreuze vor dem Gesichte und Brust schlagen; und

3tio.

Digitized by Google

3tio. Verbeugungen bis auf die Erde machen könne.

Die erwähnten Worte: Gospodi pomilui, das ist: Herr sey gnädig, oder Kyrie Eleyson, kommen im Gottesdienste unzählichemal vor. Bald von der Geistlichkeit, bald von dem Chor der Sänger, und bald wieder von den Layen.

Nach dem allgemeinen Volksglauben hat das Zeichen des Kreuzes die Kraft, böse Geister zu vertreiben, und jedes Unglück von dem Menschen abzuwenden. Die Art, wie es gemacht wird, unterscheidet es von der Bezeichnung der abendländischen Kirche, denn diese bewegen bekanntlich die Hand von der linken zur rechten Schulter, die Russen im Gegentheil, so wie die ganze griechische Kirche, von der rechten zur linken. Jedermann, der einigermassen religiös ist, oder es scheinen will, macht dieses Kreuz wohl zwanzigmal hintereinander unter Wiederholung der Worte: Gospodi pomilui, und vertheilen es in gewisse Stanzen, zu derer jeden drey gehören. Das erste ist zugleich das gröste, und mit einer tiefen Verbeugung verbunden; das zweyte ist klei-

ner

Digitized by Google

ner, und das dritte wird unmerklich; aber alle drey mit unglaublicher Geschwindigkeit gemacht.

Bei den Verbeugungen gehen sie sehr weit. Sie legen sich öfters, so lang sie sind, in der Kirche auf die Erde nieder. In der Fasten und an einigen andern Bußtägen sieht man ganze Schaaren auf der Erde zusammengekrümmt, und der Länge nach ausgestreckt.

Unter den Lehrmeinungen des gemeinen Mannes sind die von den guten und bösen Engeln von grossem Werth. Chaldäische Dämonologie, oder Geisterlehre ist Volksglaube und Lehre des Katechismus. Die bösen Engel sind die Verführer der menschlichen Seelen. Sie reizen unaufhörlich zu aller Bosheit, und zu allen Lastern, so daß sich der gemeine Mann vor ihnen mehr fürchtet, als vor Gott. Wenn nicht das muthige Temperament der Russen sie vor der Zusammenschrumpfung der Seele sicherte, so würden diese und andere Lehrmeinungen den Geist sehr unterdrücken.

Digitized by Google

Inkonsequenz ist einer der Hauptcharakterzüge der Volksreligion. In dem russischen Katechismus, zum Beispiel selbst in dem, den der ehemalige Archimandrit, nachher aber Metropolit, Platon herausgegeben hat, wird die Lehre des Ablasses und Supererogation der guten Werke geläugnet, und doch den sogenannten guten Werken, als Wallfahrten, Allmosen geben, Fasten u. s. w. ein Werth beigelegt, den sie ohne jene Lehren nicht haben können.

Die Russen läugnen die Lehre von der reinigenden Quaal, oder vom Fegfeuer, indem sie behaupten, es sey eine unrichtige und mißverstandene Meinung des heil. Origenes, und doch haben sie Gebete und Kirchen-Ceremonien für die Todten.

Die bestimmte Vorherverordnung Gottes, oder Prädestination ist Lehre der russischen Kirche und Volksglaube; mit dieser Prädestination wird die gänzliche Wahlfreyheit des Menschen verbunden, so daß ihm jede Handlung, da er doch dazu prädestinirt war, zugerechnet oder imputirt wird. Ja, um diese Inkonsequenz noch mehr zu vergrös-

sern,

Digitized by Google

sern, sprechen die russischen Theologen dem Menschen die Freyheit zum Guten gänzlich ab. Sie sagen, durch Adams Sündenfall habe der Mensch die Freyheit, das Gute zu wählen, verloren. Was der Mensch Gutes thut, wirkt, dieser Lehre zu Folge, nicht der Mensch, sondern der heil. Geist. Strenge Imputation wird mit einem sehr überwiegenden Hange zum Bösen vereinbaret.

Aus dem Spruch im andern Buch Mosis Kap. 20. V. 4. Du sollst dir kein Bildniß machen. — Beweisen die russischen Gottesgelehrten, daß man keine Statuen, oder runde Figuren zu einem andächtigen Gebrauche als Christ dulden dürfe. Bildnisse im Gegentheil, als Gemälde, Mosaikarbeiten, Basreliefs, kurz alles, was auf einem ebenen Grunde vorgestellt wird, ist davon ausgenommen.

Digitized by Google

Russische Geistlichkeit.

Die russische Geistlichkeit theilt sich in Weltgeistliche und Ordensgeistliche. Die Weltgeistlichen sind die Seelsorger und Pfarrer. Als Priester müssen sie, der Regel nach, eine Frau haben; stirbt diese, so verlieren sie ihr Amt, weil sie zum zweytenmal nicht heurathen dürfen. Gemeiniglich begeben sie sich in ein Kloster. Doch hat man in neuen Zeiten mehr Beispiele, wo die Priester nach dem Tode ihrer Frau von der heiligst-dirigirenden Synode dispensirt wurden, daß sie ihr Pfarramt länger verwalten dürften.

Die Weltgeistlichkeit, im weitläuftigsten Verstande genommen, theilt man in solche, die 1. die ganze Weihe haben. Das sind Oberpriester, Protopopen; gewöhnliche Priester, Popen. 2. Die die halbe Weihe haben. Diese dürfen die heil.

Digitized by Google

heil. Sakramente nicht verwalten, z. E. Der Diakon und Leser. 3. Die keine Weihen haben, und eigentlich auch nicht zur Weltgeistlichkeit sollten gerechnet werden. Dieses sind die Sänger und Küster.

Die Ordensgeistlichkeit ist hier wichtiger als in der römischen Kirche, weil nur aus ihr die höchsten Würden besetzt werden. Man theilt sie 1. in die höchste geistliche Obrigkeit, das sind Metropoliten, Erzbischöfe und Bischöfe. 2. Vorsteher der Ordensgeistlichkeit; das sind die Archimandriten (Aebte) und Igumen (Priören.) 3. Mönche.

Wer Ansprüche auf die hohen Würden eines Bischofs u. s. w. macht, muß durchaus erst Mönch werden. Wegen ihrer vorzüglichen Gelehrsamkeit und feineren Lebensart haben sie auch gemeiniglich mehr Achtung, als die Weltpriester. Unter den Mönchen in Rußland wird weniger Herrschsucht und Neid genährt, als in andern Ländern; denn alle Mönche machen nur einen einzigen Orden aus. Diese Ordensregel schreibt sich vom heil. Basilius, Ephraim von Edessa,

Gre-

Digitized by Google

Gregorius, Chrysostomus und andern her, die sie nach einander vervollkommet haben. Sie dürfen dem alten Herkommen zu Folge nie Fleisch essen. Sie sollen nur vier Stunden schlafen, ein strenges Leben führen und öfters fasten. Alle Mönche, so wie auch die Weltgeistlichen, lassen ihren Bart wachsen. Die Mönche der russischen Kirche haben der Regel nach keine Weihen; diejenigen aber, die nach dem Bischofsstabe streben, lassen sich dieselben geben.

Die Aufnahme eines Novizen ist mit vielen Ceremonien verknüpft. Er muß viele Fragen beantworten. Z. E. Frage: Was willst du? Antwort: Das Leben der Enthaltung. Frage: Willst du deinen Obern gehorchen? Antwort: Gott sey mein Helfer! u. s. w.

Als symbolische Handlung werden ihnen die Haare abgeschnitten, wobei ihnen gesagt wird, daß sie nun alle böse Gedanken und Begierden ablegen müssen. Damit aber alles von Seiten des jungen Mönchs freywillig hergehe, so muß er selbst die Scheere zum Haar abschneiden dem Prior überreichen. Dieser, der Prior (Igumen) legt sie

zwey-

Digitized by Google

zweymal bei Seite, indem er ihn zu diesem strengen Leben dadurch nicht veranlassen will. Wenn aber der junge Mensch ihm die Scheere zum drittenmal überreicht, so schneidet er ihm endlich die Haare kreuzweise ab. Hierauf giebt er ihm den langen Mönchsrock, den Gürtel, die Kappe, den Mantel und ein paar Socken. Der junge Mönch kommunizirt, und empfängt dann eine Kerze, ein Kreuz und den Bruderkuß.

Die Kleidung der Mönche ist schwarz, da die der Weltpriester im Gegentheil aus andern Farben, als blau, violet, aschgrau u. d. gl. besteht.

Der geistliche Stand ist in Rußland gewissermassen erblich, zwar nicht durch Gesetze, wie bei den Hebräern und Egyptern, aber durch altes Herkommen, wie bei mehrern Stämmen von Indianern und Amerikanern. Die Weltpriester (Stadt- und Dorfpopen) schicken meist alle ihre Söhne in die Seminarien, worinne sie entweder zu künftigen Priestern oder Mönchen gebildet werden. Die Söhne des Militärs bestimmen sich äusserst selten zum geistlichen Stande, ohngeachtet

die

Digitized by Google

die Aussicht, einst Bischof werden zu können reizen könnte. Den Bauern erlaubt es der Erbherr nicht, daß sie sich hiezu widmen, weil er dadurch Kopfgeld und Frohndienst verlieren würde. Alle zum geistlichen Stande gehörige Personen, bis zum niedrigsten Küster sind von der Kopfsteuer frey.

Geistliche tragen nie Perücken, ja sie binden in Kirchendienst nicht einmal ihre Haare in einen Zopf. Sie haben immer freyfliegende, ungepuderte und unfrisirte, oft weit über den Rücken und die Schultern herabhängende Haare, die mit dem langen Barte ein unreinliches Ansehen geben.

Ehemals waren die Popen eben so unwissend, als sie meistentheils auch sehr unsittlich handelten. Durch strengere Aufsicht von Seiten der heiligst dirigirenden Synode, und durch Verbesserung der geistlichen Seminarien wird beyden Mängeln immer mehr abgeholfen, und man darf sagen, daß diese Vorkehrungen den klugen Veranstaltungen der Kaiserinn hauptsächlich zuzuschreiben sind.

Rus-

Digitized by Google

Russische Feste.

Statt unsers heiligen Dreykönigsfestes feyert die griechische Kirche das Fest, Theophanias genannt. Es heißt auch das Fest der Wasserweihe, oder Jordansheiligung. Da den 6. Januar, nach dem hiesigen Klima die Flüsse überall zugefroren sind, so wird ein Loch aufgeeiset, und mit vielen Ceremonien und Gebethen geheiliget. In diesem Gebethe stehet unter andern: „An „ diesem Tage wird die Natur des Wassers heilig „ gemacht, der Jordan fließt aus, und der Herr „ wird getauft. Das Wasser wird geweihet, „ damit es uns befreye von den Fallstricken und „ von der Zauberkraft des Satans, daß diejeni„ gen, die daraus schöpfen, ihre Häuser heiligen, „ und sich von vieler Noth befreyen können."— Der Priester nimmt zuerst Wasser mit einer Schüssel, taucht die Basilike, das ist, eine Quaste von dem Kraut Basilikum (bisweilen ist sie

nur

nur von Borsten verfertigt) hinein; mit derselben besprengt er die Umstehenden. Vornehme Personen werden damit an der Stirne kreuzweise bestrichen. Kleine Kinder werden dem Popen gegeben, daß er sie untertauche. Bei der strengsten Kälte werden nackende Kinder darinnen gewaschen. Viele gemeine Leute holen sich dann Wasser, um es zu trinken, oder ihren Kranken zu Hause zu geben. Dieses soll öfters mehr, als die beste Arzney helfen.

Am grünen Donnerstage wird das Fußwaschen, wie in der römischen Kirche, und wie von der Brüdergemeinde gefeyert. Der Unterschied bestehet darinne, daß der Bischof nicht gemeinen Leuten aus dem Layenstande, sondern andern Geistlichen die Füsse wäscht. Nie verrichten es Monarchen oder weltliche Fürsten.

Der orthodoxe Sonntag ist ein anderes Fest, welches am ersten Sonntage in der grösten Fasten vor Ostern gefeyert wird. Er führt diesen Namen, weil an demselben alle Ketzer, das ist, nicht griechische Christen, als heterodoxe Menschen verdammt und verwünschet werden. Hier-

Digitized by Google

unter verstehen sie die Katholiken, Lutheraner, Reformirte, und kurz, alle anders denkende Christen. Man bedient sich dabei unter andern folgender Ausdrücke:

„ Denen, welche behaupten, daß die gebene-
„ deite Jungfrau Maria, nicht eine Jungfrau
„ war vor ihrer Niederkunft, in der Niederkunft,
„ und nach ihrer Niederkunft geblieben ist, diesen
„ sagen wir Anathema, Anathema, Anathema.
„ Denen, welche die Konzilien der heiligen Vä-
„ ter und ihre Traditionen verwerfen, die der
„ göttlichen Offenbarung gemäß sind, und welche
„ die orthodoxe griechische Kirche annimmt, sey
„ Anathema, Anathema, Anathema. — De-
„ nen, welche sagen, daß der Sohn Gottes und
„ der heil. Geist, nicht gleich wesentlich und von
„ gleicher Ehre mit dem Vater sind, und daß
„ die drey Personen, Vater, Sohn und heil.
„ Geist nicht ein Wesen und ein Gott sind, sey
„ Anathema, Anathema, Anathema. Ferner
„ denen, welche lehren, daß in der einzigen Per-
„ son Jesu nicht zwey Wesen, nämlich die gött-
„ liche und menschliche Natur vereiniget seyen,
„ sey Anathema, Anathema, Anathema. " —

Un-

Digitized by Google

Unter den Prozessionen zeichnet sich in Petersburg diejenige aus, welche jährlich den 30. August nach dem Kloster des heil. Alexander Newsky gehalten wird. Die Geschichte dieses Heiligen ist kürzlich folgende:

Vor etwa 500 Jahren zeichnete sich der Sohn eines damaligen Großfürsten, Namens Alexander, sehr vortheilhaft bei der Vertheidigung und Ausbreitung der christlichen Religion, und bei der Vertreibung der anders Gesinnten aus. Wegen eines grossen Sieges an der Newa erhielt er den Beinamen Newsky. Nach seinem Tode wurde er Heilig gesprochen, und bei seinem Grabe zu Wlodimir geschahen Wunder. Lange lagen Alexanders Gebeine hier in stiller Ruhe. Bei der Erbauung Petersburg wurde Peter dem I. der Einwurf gemacht, daß sich hier nicht einmal ein Heiliger befände. Er half aber diesem Mangel dadurch ab, daß er die Reste dieses Heiligen mit vielem Pompe hieher übersetzen ließe. Er stiftete ihm zu Ehren den Ritterorden des heil. Alexanders, der aber erst nach seinem Tode vertheilet wurde. Die Ritter dieses Ordens, wenigstens die in demselben Jahr ernannten Ritter, die Geistlich-

Digitized by Google

lichkeit, viele andere vornehme Personen, und eine Menge gemeiner Leute ziehen am gedachten Tage in Prozession aus einer Kirche nach dem Kloster, darinne der Heilige in einem prächtigen Sarge aufbewahret wird. Die Entfernung von der Kirche bis zum Kloster ist fünf Werste, (ohngefähr anderhalb Stunde). Da die Prozession zu Fuß geschieht, so ist der Weg mit Brettern belegt. Die Monarchinn als Großmeisterinn des Ordens, macht gemeiniglich, wenn sie zu der Zeit in Petersburg ist, einen kleinen Theil zu Fusse mit, dann aber setzt Sie sich in ihren Wagen, und fährt in das Kloster. Im Fall Sie, oder ein Ritter dieses Ordens nicht erscheinen, so müssen sie eine gewisse Strafe erlegen.

Digitized by Google

Russische Begräbnißgebräuche.

Die Russen begraben des Morgens. Vornehme lassen ihren Sarg in die Kirche, Arme auf den Kirchhof tragen. Da jeder Russe bei der Taufe einen Schutzpatron erhält, so wird dieser vor dem Sarge hergetragen. Die begleitenden Sänger beten zum Theile Verse aus den alten Kirchenvätern. So lautet einer z. B. folgendermassen:

„ Welches Vergnügen des Lebens ist nicht
„ mit Betrübniß vermischt? Was für Freuden
„ der Erde sind von stäter Dauer? Alle sind un-
„ beständiger als ein Schatten, betrüglicher als
„ ein Traum. In einem Augenblicke nimmt sie
„ der Tod hinweg. — Was ist Beifall der
„ Welt? Was ist das Ende sinnlicher Vergnü-

gun-

Digitized by Google

„ gungen? Was ist Gold und Silber? O!
„ lasset uns bitten den unsterblichen König, daß
„ er Segen verleihe, dem abgeschiedenen Knechte,
„ daß er ihm Ruhe verleihe in seiner immerwäh-
„ renden Seligkeit! — Ich dachte an die Wor-
„ te des Propheten, der da sagte: Ich bin Staub
„ und Asche. Ich betrachtete das Grab, und sa-
„ he die Gebeine, die von ihrem Fleische entle-
„ digt sind. Ich sagte: Ist dieses ein König oder
„ ein Bettler? Ein Reicher oder ein Armer?
„ Ein Gerechter oder ein Sünder? Herr! gieb
„ Ruhe deinem Knecht unter den Gerechten!" —

Ehe der Verstorbene begraben wird, giebt ihm der Pope den letzten Abschiedskuß. Das nämliche thun die Anverwandten und Freunde des Verstorbenen. Doch ist es jetzt Sitte geworden, und mit guten Vorbedacht, daß man entweder nur den Sarg küsse, oder blos Miene mache, selben küssen zu wollen.

Der Verstorbene bekömmt einen Zeddel, darauf eine Art von Beicht oder Gebeth steht, mit ins Grab. Dies Gebeth heißt die Hofnung und Bekenntniß. Es ist in slavonischer Sprache verfaßt,

Digitized by Google

faßt, und enthält abgekürzt, denn es ist ziemlich lang, folgendes:

„ Du, dreyeiniger Gott! erschufst mich (hier „ steht der Name des Verstorbenen) zur Tugend. „ Ich habe aber oft gefehlt, und bereue es sehr. „ Richte mich nicht nach meinen Werken, son„ dern nach dem orthodoxen Glauben, nach der „ Weisheit der einzigen heiligen orientalischen „ Kirche, in der ich erzogen wurde. Ich setze „ mein Vertrauen auf Christi Liebe, und bitte „ mit meinem letzten Athemzuge um Verzeihung. „ Schenk mir die ewige Seligkeit! Amen. "

Diese Beicht wird abgelesen, und dem Verstorbenen in die Hand gegeben. Es ist aber dieselbe kein Kirchengesetz, sondern nur Gewohnheit und altes Herkommen.

Die Trauer dauert gemeiniglich sechs Wochen, oder vierzig Tage, während welcher ein Pope, wenn er bezahlt wird, des Morgens und Abends auf dem Grabe bethet. Vorzüglich wichtig unter diesen Tagen ist der dritte, neunte und zwanzigste vom Begräbniß an gerechnet; an welchen die Hinter-

Digitized by Google

terlassenen nach ihren Umständen Almosen geben, bethen und bethen lassen, auch unblutige Opfer durch die Privatkommunion des Popen für den Todten besorgen.

Ausser dem feyern die Russen noch mehrere Jahre nachher das Andenken ihres Freundes, indem sie an diesem Tage zum Grabe gehen, bethen und räuchern lassen.

Digitized by Google

Russische Hierarchie.

Seit dem das Christenthum durch die Morgenländer nach Rußland kam, standen die neugestifteten Glaubens-Gemeinden unter der geistlichen Regierung der Bischöfe von Konstantinopel. Diese Abhängigkeit dauerte aber nur bis 1589. denn der damalige russische Zaar Theodor Iwanowitsch vermogte den konstantinopolitanischen Patriarchen Jeremias, daß er auf einer Kirchenversammlung zu Moskau einen besondern Patriarchen für Rußland ernannte und einweihte. Die übrigen drey Patriarchen von Jerusalem, Antiochien und Alexandrien gaben hiezu ihre Einwilligung.

Das Ansehn und die Macht dieses nordischen Kirchenhaupts stieg von Tag zu Tag. Wie konnte es auch einem schlauen Manne, der alle seine Handlungen in das ehrwürdige Gewand der Reli-

Digitized by Google

ligion einhüllte, an Gelegenheit fehlen, ein zweyter Monarch zu werden? Der natürliche Scharfsinn Peter des I. entdeckte sehr leicht das Gefährliche eines solchen Mannes; Er beschloß also, diese Würde abzuschaffen.

Nach dem Tode des Patriarchen Hadrian 1700 ernannte Peter I. keinen neuen, sondern wandte bald die damaligen Kriegsunruhen, bald die gleiche Würdigkeit mehrerer Kompetenten zu diesem Amte, und dergleichen mehr vor. Er übertrug einstweilen die Geschäfte einem hellen Kopf, dem Stephan Jaworsky, und nannte ihn Exarch, das ist: Vice-Patriarch.

Was wichtige Sachen der Religion betraf, die wies Peter I. an die Versammlung der Bischöfe, welche mit dem Senate zugleich berathschlagten. Diese Verwaltung geistlicher Geschäfte heißt gewöhnlich das Exarchat, und dauerte bis 1720, während welcher Zeit die Geistlichkeit und die Nation allmählig an eine aristokratische Verwaltungsform der Kirchengeschäfte gewöhnt wurde.

Digitized by Google

Endlich als eben die hohe Geistlichkeit beisammen war, that Peter der Grosse öffentlich die Erklärung: Er glaube ein Patriarch sey zur Verwaltung der Kirchengeschäfte weder nöthig noch nützlich, und sey entschlossen, ein Kirchenregiment einzuführen, das weder im Despotismus eines Einzigen, noch in langsame Kostspieligkeit eines oft zusammen zu beruffenden allgemeinen Conciliums ausarten könnte, und diese bestände in einer ausgesuchten, beständigen geistlichen Synode. Der grosse Mann übermand alle Schwierigkeiten. Durch ein Edikt vom Februar 1721 wurde dem Publikum die neue Einrichtung bekannt gemacht.

Die Zahl der Synodal-Assessoren ist nicht bestimmt; indessen sind es deren meist 12 bis 16. Alle, die zur höhern Geistlichkeit gehören, als Metropoliten, Erzbischöfe, Bischöfe, Archimandriten, Igumenen und Protopopen, sind fähig, zu Mitgliedern der Synode vom Monarchen ernannt zu werden. Jetzt halten sie sich zum Theil in Moskau, zum Theil in Petersburg auf.

Bei dieser Hierarchie ist es merkwürdig, daß die Mitglieder der Synode den Eid ablegen müssen,

Digitized by Google

sen, daß sie auſſer Gott kein anders Oberhaupt als den Monarchen erkennen; daß bei den Versammlungen der Synode allemal ein kaiserlicher Minister zugegen ist, der überall eine verneinende Stimme hat, damit nachtheilige oder übermüthige Schlüsse erst dem Monarchen können vorgelegt werden; daß ihren Entscheidungen, die Entführung einer Person, und die fleischlichen Vergehungen gänzlich entzogen, und sie über die Heirathen in verbothenen Graden nicht allein entscheiden dürfen, sondern gemeinschaftlich mit den weltchen Gerichten.

Und so stehet es noch bis auf den heutigen Tag. Diese heilige gesetzgebende Synode (dies ist ihr eigentlicher Titel) ist über alle andere Dikasterien erhoben, so, daß sie mit dem Senate gleichen Rang hat. Sie entscheidet über Kirchengebräuche, Ketzereyen, Gotteslästerung, Ehebruch, Kandidaten-Examen, Dispensationen, u. s. m. Nach einem Ausspruch dieser Synode ist zwar kein würdiger Mann wegen seiner Religion von seinem Amte oder Dienste ausgeschlossen; indessen hat sie doch die merkwürdigen Worte hinzugefügt, daß kein Russe, der in der griechischen

Kir-

Digitized by Google

Kirche geboren und erzogen ist, seine Religion ändern dürfe. Alle andere Religionsverwandte können von einer Parthey zur andern, oder auch zur Russischen übertreten.

Die russische Hierarchie hat also in einem Zeitraum von 300 Jahren vier Metamorphosen erlebt: 1. Orientalisches Patriarchat. 2. Russisches Patriarchat. 3. Exarchat, und 4. heiligst dirigirende gesetzgebende Synode. —

Digitized by Google

Russische Vergnügungen.

Die Wahl der Ergötzungen charakterisiren den Geist des Volks. Anders vergnügt sich eine feige Nation, anders eine muthvolle; so eine rohe, und abermal anders eine gesittete. Die meisten Vergnügungen der Russen haben ein Ansehn von Vielgewagten und Tollkühnen.

Die Eisbahn.

Zu dieser Lieblings-Ergötzlichkeit wird ein hohes Gerüste mit Brettern belegt, daß es einem steilen Berge gleicht. Dieser Berg wird im Winter auf einer Seite mit Stroh und Schnee belegt, dann mit Wasser begossen, wodurch er spiegelhelle und glatt wird. Auf der hintern Seite

Digitized by Google

te steigen die gemeinen Russen mit kleinen Schlitten hinauf, und fahren dann mit unglaublicher Geschwindigkeit den Eisberg hinab. Der Stoß, den der Schlitten erhält, ist so groß, daß er im Herunterstürzen noch eine weite Strecke fortläuft. Dies Vergnügen ist wirklich halsbrechend, aber von dem gemeinen Mann sehr hochgeschätzt.

In Petersburg werden alle Winter dergleichen Eisbahne auf der zugefrornen Newa und in den Vorstädten zum uneingeschränkten Gebrauch für Jedermann erbaut; in Moskau auf der Moskwa und auf grossen Marktplätzen; in Reval ließ der Admiral jährlich eine solche Eisbahn vor sein Haus in der Vorstadt errichten. Sie diente ihm zur Unterhaltung, wenn oft mehrere hundert Personen dabei versammelt waren. Menschen, die von Jugend an zu solchen Gefahren unter dem Schein des Vergnügens gewöhnt werden, sind dann gewiß auch mislicher Unternehmungen fähig.

Nicht blos der gemeine Mann, sondern selbst die Vornehmsten des Staats, die Monarchinn in ihren jüngeren Jahren; der Großfürst, und die andern Hofleute machen sich ein ähnliches Vergnügen

Digitized by Google

gen auf den Luſtſchlöſſern Oranienbaum, Petershof, und ehemals auch zu Sarskoy-Selo. An den gedachten Orten ſind nachgeahmte Eisberge erbaut; man nennt ſie Rutſchbahnen, fliegende Berge, oder Sommereisbahnen.

Die Bahn z. B. in Oranienbaum iſt ein groſſes hölzernes mit Brettern belegtes Gerüſte, deſſen Oberfläche eine Wellenlinie ausmacht. Sie bildet vier Bögen, deren eine immer höher als der andere iſt. An die höchſte Spitze ſtößt ein Haus, von deſſen Dache man auf den Berg gehen kann. Auf die Bahn des gewölbten Bergs wird eine Chaiſe, welche die Geſtalt eines Schlittens hat, geſtellt, und eine Perſon ſetzt ſich hinein. Der Schlitten bekömmt einen Stoß, und läuft dann von ſelbſt den Abhang hinab. Durch das Abwärtslaufen erhält die Rutſchſchaiſe eine ſolche Schnellkraft, daß ſie ſich von ſelbſt auf die zweyte Wölbung des Bergs erhebt. Von da fängt ſie wieder an, den Berg hinabzulaufen, und erhält von neuem Stoßkraft, den zweyten Höcker zu erreichen. So geht es auch das dritte und viertemal, bis ſie ganz herunter gerennt iſt, wo ſie noch eine gute Strecke fortſchießt.

So

So gefährlich auch dieses aussieht, so ist es doch hier ziemlich sicher, und gar nicht mit jenen eigentlichen Eisbergen zu vergleichen; denn diese Rutschschaisen haben kleine Räder, die in Fugen laufen, so, daß sie nicht aus dem Geleise heraustreten können. Die Räder gehen in einer Falze, die nur eine solche Oefnung hat, daß die Axe der Chaise ohne grosse Friktion durchlaufen kann. Die Schnelligkeit, die vielleicht dem einen oder andern furchtsamern Vornehmen gegen das Ende zu, wo sie sich vermehrt, unangenehm wird, kann durch Anhalten des Seils, das hinten an der Chaise befestigt ist, etwas vermindert werden.

Rußlands ehemalige Regenten liebten diese Sommer-Schlittenfahrt mehr, als die jetzige Kaiserinn, welche die vorhin bei Sarskoy-Selo erwähnte Bahn hat abreissen lassen.

Sonst machten sich die Herren und Damen am Hofe bei schönem Wetter nach Tische diese Bewegung fast täglich; jetzt geschieht es vom Großfürsten und seinen Gesellschaftern nur sehr selten. Die Länge einer solchen Bahne beträgt mehr als eine halbe Werst, deren sieben auf eine deutsche Mei-

Digitized by Google

Meile gerechnet werden. Sie giebt übrigens vermög ihrer Struktur, die mit Kolonaden geziert ist, dem Ganzen ein sehr majestätisches Ansehn.

Ein anderes Volksvergnügen sind

Die Schaukeln.

Die man bei uns unter dem Namen der Schußen, so zu sagen, verstehen kann. Man hat deren eine grosse Menge von sehr verschiedener Art. Einige sind so gebauet, daß sich die Schaukeln, wie ein Mühlrad um eine horizontalliegende Stelle herumdrehen. Vier Sitze sind in der Peripherie des Rades angebracht, so daß man sich einmal in den Lüften, das anderemal ganz unten befindet. Dieses grosse Rade wird mit unglaublicher Geschwindigkeit herumgedrehet.

Die gemeinste Art von russischen und ehstnischen Schaukeln ist diejenige, wo auf zwey in dem Erdboden perpendikulär befestigten Pfählen

ei-

Digitized by Google

eine horizontale, oder Querbalken-Welle ruhet, die sich leicht herumdrehet. An diesem Querbalken hängt ein hölzerner Siß. Das Mädchen seßt sich, und die Mannsperson stellt sich so, daß jene sich zwischen seinen Füssen befindet. Durch Beugung der Knie und Anstrengung des ganzen Körpers bringt er den Siß an der beweglichen Welle in einen solchen Schwung, daß er sich nebst dem Mädchen rund um die Axe herum schleudert. Schröcklich ist der Anblick; denn bald steht der Mann mit dem Kopfe unterwärts, wenn sich der Siß in der Höhe befindet, bald bildet die Länge seines Körpers eine Paralellinie mit der Oberfläche der Erde, wenn der Siß im Steigen oder Fallen begriffen ist. Manche machen dieses kreisförmige Schaukeln mit einer solchen Geschwindigkeit, daß es dem Zuschauer, dessen Auge an solche tollkühne Vergnügen nicht gewöhnt ist, ganz übel wird.

So wie diese beiden Vergnügungen, das eine im Winter, das andere im Sommer, den Muth nähren, so sind auch die meisten übrigen so beschaffen, daß sie körperliche Stärke befördern. Laufen, Werfen, Schlagen, Ringen u. d. gl.

sind

Digitized by Google

sind gemeiniglich damit verbunden. Dergleichen Uebungen müssen einer Nation, die täglich dergleichen sieht, und selbst mitmacht, kühnen Unternehmungsgeist einflössen, und Furcht vor Gefahren verscheuchen, wovon sie in ihren Feldzügen hinlängliche Proben zur Bewunderung aller Nationen abgelegt haben.

Digitized by Google

Petersburger Naturalienkabinet.

Wenige Naturalienſammlungen dürften wohl im Stande ſeyn, ſo zu überraſchen, als jenes in Petersburg.

Beim Eintritt in den groſſen Saal erblickt man einen ausgeſtopften Elephanten mit ſeinem auf ihm ſitzenden Führer. Gegenüber befindet ſich deſſen ungeheures Skelet.

Dieſem größten Landthiere folgen ausgeſtopfte Tyger, Leoparden, Löwen, Pferde, der Dſchiggetai, (ein wildes eſelähnliches Pferd aus der Mungolei, welches noch kein Sterblicher bisher bändigen konnte.) Ferner der weiſſe Bär, Wolf, Argali (ein wilder ſiberiſcher Widder mit ſchnörkelförmigen Hörnern,) der Sarlik - Ukyr (Ochſe mit Pferdemähnen, oder der tybetiſche Büf-

fel,

Digitized by Google

fel, von dessen Haaren vornehme Chineser grosse Zöpfe auf der Spitze ihrer Hüte herabhängend tragen), desgleichen der Bobal, (das sibirische Murmelthier), der Dschakalt, der weisse Fuchs, der Vielfraß, viele Arten von Zobel, der Strauß, Kasuar, Albatros (der Kriegsschiffsvogel,) der mit ausgebreiteten Flügeln zehn Fuß hat.

Diese und viele andere grosse und kleine Geschöpfe aus den entferntesten Regionen, und aus den verborgensten Schlufwinkeln der Erde, die sich in grossen gläsernen Kästen befinden, zwischen denen man, wie durch kleine Strassen durchwandelt, machen einen unbeschreiblichen Eindruck.

So wenig man dem, der nie liebte, oder dem, der in seinem Leben keine Periode tiefe Religiosität hatte, oder auch dem, der nie einen wahren Freund mit Wärme schätzte, das Süsse der Liebe, der Andacht und der Freundschaft begreiflich machen kann; eben so wenig glaube ich, kann man die Empfindungen, die der Anblick solcher Scenen gewährt, bei dem, der sie nie sah, erregen.

Die Bewohner der Erde, des Wassers und der Luft sind hier beisammen. Die Geschöpfe, welche Winter und Sommer, Tag und Nacht scheidet, sind gepaart. Die Antipathie der Raub- und zahmen Thiere ist aufgehoben; beyde, Indien, der äusserste Norden und Süden liefern hier die abweichendsten Gestalten, den wunderbarsten Körperbau, und ganz verschiedene Organisation.

Wenn man die unzähligen Stufenfolgen der natürlichen Körper, wie sich einer dem andern nähert oder entfernt, betrachtet, wie nicht blos die Gestalt des einen Fisches mit der eines andern sich zusammenreihen läßt, sondern wie von der Steinpflanze an bis zum Menschen mehrere Leiter auf- und abwärts führen; so bewundert man eben so sehr die Uebereinstimmung der Bildung und die Harmonie des Ganzen, als man sich seine vorhergehende Blindheit vorwirft. So verbindet die Polype und das empfindende Gewächse die Pflanzen mit dem Thiere. Die Thiere und das Steinreich sind verknüpft durch Korallen und Afterpflanzen; und Mineralien gränzen aneinander im Steinmoos und Steinschwamm.

Die

Die Säugethiere und Vögel vereinigt die Kette, die vom fliegenden Hunde, fliegender Katze, fliegendem Eichhorn, Fledermaus, Strauß, Kasuar bis zum Singvogel gezogen wird. Die Säugethiere hängen mit den Fischen durch mehrere Amphibienarten zusammen durch den Seelöwen, Biber, Wassermaus, Fischotter, Seehund, Seekalb, Roggen, Seekuh, Wallfisch. Mit den Schaalthieren sind sie der äusseren Bildung nach durch die Manisarten verbunden.

Die Vögel werden ausser schon genannten an die Fische angeknüpft durch die Schwimmvögel und fliegenden Fische. Auf einer andern Seite scheinen sie an die Insekten zu gränzen durch die Kolubri, Federkäfer, Schmetterlinge bis zu deren Raupe, die sich, um Puppe zu werden, unter die Erde verkriecht.

Die Schaalthiere gränzen durch Krebs und Krabbe an die Insekten; durch Schildkröte und Krokodill an die Amphibien; durch die Erdschnecke an die kriechenden Thiere, und diese kriechenden Thiere reihen sich an die Fische durch Schlange und Aal.

Digitized by Google

Die Würmer schliessen sich durch Zoophyten nicht nur an die Pflanzen, sondern auch auf verschiedenen Wegen an die Insekten an. Das Insekt, das indianische wandelnde Blatt wächst als Knospe am Baum, die vier Blätter'chen werden Flügel, der Stiel Hals, der Knopf, der den Zweig und Stiel verband, wird Kopf. Wenn andere Blätter im Herbste abfallen, so fliegen diese fort, begatten sich, stechen Knospen, legen Eyerchen hinein, und im künftigen Herbst fliegen wieder Blätter, als Insekten herum.

Mehrere Wurmarten, die Bewohner schaalichter und steinerner Röhren, der Korallen, nähern sich den Schaalthieren, die so einfach, wie Polypen, sind.

Dergleichen auf und absteigende Naturleitern lassen sich in einem solchen Kabinete, wie dieses ist, leicht vermehren; so daß man vom Menschen anfängt, und zum rohesten Sandstein durch alle drey Naturreiche, durch Thier- Pflanzen- und Steinreich, herabsteigt.

Bei

Digitized by Google

Bei dem Thierreich kann man den Weg durch die Felder der Säugethiere, Vögel, Amphibien, Fische, Insekten und Würmer, oder auch in einer andern beliebigen Ordnung nehmen.

Um sich eine solche Naturleiter zu machen, dächte ich, könnten folgende Stücke, einige Leitersprossen abgeben: Z. B.

Der Mensch.
Waldmensch.
Gibbon.
Orang Utang.
Maimon.
Satyr.
Pavian.
Paniscus.
Uebrige Affenarten.
Beutelthier.
Hamster.
Ratte.
Feldmaus.
Hausmaus.
Fledermaus.

Digitized by Google

Vögel.
Schwimmvögel.
Sumpfvögel.
Uebergang zu den Amphibien.
Schlangen ohne Füß und Floßfedern.
Uebergang zu den Fischen.
Seehahn, Trigla.
Schwimminsekten.
Raupe.
Wurm.
Uebergang zu andern Würmen.
Thierpflanzen, Zoophyten.
Uebergang zu dem Pflanzenreich.
Steinpflanzen, Lithophiten.
Uebergang zu dem Mineralreich.
Ein anderer Uebergang durch
Schaalthiere
Schnecken
Muscheln
An Felsen angewachsene Austern,
Korallen, führt auch zum Mineralreich.

Die Verbindung der natürlichen Körper ist, wie der letzte Uebergang zeigt, nicht blos an einem Orte, es ist nicht ein Zirkel in der Natur, son-

Digitized by Google

sondern ihr Name ist tausendmaltausend, zumal wenn man an die unendlich kleinen Milben, und dergleichen denkt, welche ähnliche Abstuffungen, so wie die grösseren Thiere an den grossen Tempel der Natur bilden.

So ist z. B. die Maus mit dem Beutelthier durch Feldmaus, Ratte und Hamster verbunden; mit dem Eichhorn durch die gestreifte und durch die langfüssige Maus; mit der Fischotter durch die Wassermaus; mit den Meerschweinarten durch das Murmelthier; mit dem Kaninchen und Haasen durch die Haselmaus; mit dem Maulwurf durch die gestreifte Maus.

Auf diese Art greift jedes Thier in mehrere Zirkel ein, so, daß dadurch ein dicht verbundenes Ganzes entstehet.

Aus diesem Gesichtspunkt betrachtet hat das Naturalienkabinet in Petersburg einen Werth, den ihm viele andere nicht streitig machen können, da selbes an der Seltenheit sowohl, als auch Mannigfaltigkeit vieler Natursprodukte einen ungemein wichtiger Vorsprung gemacht zu haben sich schmeichlen darf.

Von

Digitized by Google

Von dem
Seekriege
überhaupt
und in
Beziehung auf Rußland.

Die Art, Kriege auf der See zu führen, ist von jener auf dem festen Lande, sehr weit unterschieden. Es ist daher nöthig, um sich eine Idee davon zu verschaffen, daß man eine Kenntniß von der Grösse der Schiffe, dem Kaliber ihrer Kanonen, und der Anzahl ihrer Equipage erhalte, welche beiliegende Tabelle am besten ertheilen wird.

Bei stürmischer See halten sich die Schiffe weiter entfernt, um nicht aneinander zu stossen. Ueberhaupt fällt die genaue geometrische Bestimmung in diesem Falle weg, da Schiffe auf dem Meere sich nicht so leicht und prezise ordnen lassen, als Bataillons zu Lande.

Die

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Die Schiffe von 120 Kanonen sind die grösten, die man baut. Sie haben drey Batterien, zwey Kastele, und einen Campan. Gewöhnlich werden sie von General-Offiziers bestiegen. Das Feuer ihrer obern Batterie ist vortheilhaft, wenn sie auf Schiffe von geringerer Höhe stossen, oder entern. Sie sind wegen ihrer Grösse und Schwere nicht gut zu manövriren, und schicken sich schlecht zu Expeditionen, die Aktivität erfodern. Man gebraucht sie gewöhnlich nur bei grossen Armeen und Seezügen. Die von 90 und 80 manövriren leichter, und ihre Batterien sind gut. Die ersten haben drey Batterien, und sehr kleine Kastele. Die von 80 Kanonen, und zwey Batterien sammt ihren Kastelen sind denen von diesem Range vorzuziehen, welche zuweilen drey Batterien aber keine Kastele haben. Sie können den grösten Schiffen widerstehen, und schiessen beinahe so viel Pfund Kugeln in einer Lage, als die Schiffe von 100 Kanonen.

Die Schiffe von 74 Kanonen sind durch ihre Stärke und Grösse im Stande ein lebhaftes und nachdrückliches Feuer oder Gefechte zu führen, und man zieht sie den oben erwähnten vor, um

den

Digitized by Google

den Krieg in entfernte Länder zu verlegen. Sie werden als fürtrefliche Bataillen-Schiffe angesehen, und formiren mit Schiffen von 80 und 64 Kanonen Flotten, welche die Stärke mit der Leichtigkeit verbinden. Denn die Schiffe von 64 Kanonen sind von einem sehr ausgebreiteten Dienst und Nutzen, und werden unter die besten Bataillen-Schiffe gezählt. Sie sind zu Seezügen, die weit gehen, und zu Unternehmungen, die Aktivität erheischen, sehr bequem.

Die 50 Kanonen-Schiffe, sind die kleinsten von der Linie, man gebraucht sie mehr, Kaufahrthey-Fahrer zu begleiten, und verschickt zu werden, als in der Schlachtordnung zu streiten.

Die Fregatten und Corvetten dienen bei den Flotten zum Ausspähen. Sie halten sich in der Schlacht bereit, den Schiffen beizustehen, welche gelitten haben, und zugleich die feindlichen Brander zu hindern, sich ihnen zu nähern. Einige von ihnen wiederholen die Signale, und überbringen die Befehle des Obersten Anführers durch die Flotte. Man gebraucht sie auch zu Convoyen und Aufträgen, wo grössere Schiffe nicht nöthig sind.

Digitized by Google

sind. Die Signale geschehen durch Aufsteckung von Flaggen von allerhand Farben, und an gewissen Stellen, wobei vor und nachher Kanonenschüsse geschehen, die sie ansagen oder bezeichnen. Des Nachts bedient man sich der Leuchten.

Die Brander sind gewöhnlich alte Schiffe, die man mit Feuerwerk anfüllt, und ihnen einige Kanonen zutheilt, um theils die Signale geben zu können, als auch kleine Fahrzeuge abzuhalten. Sie haben auf jeder Seite am Hintertheil eine Thüre, wodurch sich ihre Mannschaft rettet, wenn sie an feindlichen Schiffe eingehackt, und angezündet sind. Die Brander legen sich allzeit vorm Wind an das Schiff, damit die Flammen desto besser hineinschlagen. Sie können viel zum Sieg durch die Bestürzung und die Unordnung beitragen, die sie unter dem Feinde anrichten.

Man unterscheidet die Geschwader oder Abtheilungen einer Flotte durch besondere Flaggen, um sie nicht zu vermengen, und auch den Umlauf der Befehle leichter zu machen: Ihre Anzahl hängt von der Grösse der Flotte und den Absichten des Befehlhabers ab. Sind die ersten Di-

vi-

visionen zu groß, so theilt man sie wieder in kleine Geschwader, die wieder durch Flaggen sich auszeichnen, zu welchem Korps sie gehören. Die Fregatten in ihrem Gefolge führen ebenfalls die Flagge ihrer Division.

Des Nachts unterscheidet man die Schiffe durchs Feuer, und fügt nach Gelegenheit noch Flintenschüsse und andere Merkmahle hinzu, indem man z. B. auf jedem Schiffe, den ihm eigenen Marsch schlagen läßt. Man hat in den Seetaktiken Vorschriften und Erklärungen der Zeichen. Folgende Beispiele werden die Sache deutlicher machen.

Jede Abtheilung eines Geschwaders hat ihren Flaggenmast auf dem Admiralschiff. So ist z. B. der Besaan für die Arrieregarde. Wenn was an diese befohlen werden soll, wird die Zeichenflagge dahin gestellt. Eben so giebt der Fock- oder Vordermast die Befehle an die Avantgarde, dem Vice-Admiral und seinen Kapitains Zeichen zum Aufbruch: man macht sich dazu fertig, das obere Segel am Vordermast wird losgebunden, man läßt es fallen. Zum Anker lichten: Zwey

Ka-

Digitized by Google

Kanonenschüsse geschwind aufeinander. Unter Segel gehen: Am Tage wird das Obersegel des Vordermasts aufgewunden; des Nachts eine Laterne an den Flaggenstock gehängt. Eben so giebt der Kapitain die Zeichen an den Admiral. Z. B. Wenn er fremde Schiffe sieht: Flagge auf dem Borgspriet, und hinten roth. Wenn es eine Flotte ist: Weiß und blau gestreift. Wenn es Feinde sind: Roth und blau gestreift. Wenn er ein Land sieht: Weiß und roth gestreift. Wenn er beschädiget ist: Weiß und blau, und einen Kanonenschuß. Wenn er in Gefahr ist: Weiß und roth quadrirt, und einen Kanonenschuß; des Nachts zwey Feuer auf dem grossen Mast, und zwey Kanonschüsse. Wenn er mit dem Admiral sprechen will: Roth und blau quadrirt, ist aber die Sache dringend, noch ein Kanonenschuß. Wenn er Leck ist: Ein Wimpel roth auf dem Flaggenstock. Kranke: Wimpel weiß. Brodmangel: Wimpel weiß und blau. Holzmangel: Weiß und roth. Wassermangel: Blau.

Der Admiral antwortet durch eben die Zeichen, zum Beweis, daß er es verstanden. Er erkundigt sich auch auf die Art bei seinen Kapitains nach dergleichen Umständen.

Digitized by Google

In der Schlachtordnung bleiben die Fregatten in der Nähe der Linienschiffe, um die Befehle zu empfangen. Die Brander halten ausserhalb den Fregatten einen starken Stuckschuß weit; und die Frachtschiffe ausserhalb den Brandern.

Die Flotte streitet in einer Linie. Man nennt Avantgarde, die Division, die an der Spitze der Linie; und Arrieregarde, diejenigen, die am Ende ist. Das Mittel heißt, das Korps der Armee, wo sich gewöhnlich der Befehlshaber befindet.

Die Schiffe streiten von der Seite, weil ihre Stärke in den Lagen ihres Geschützes liegt, und halten sich beim Gefechte unter Segel. Das Entern ist ein eben so delikates als kühnes Manöver, das wenigstens eben so viel Talent als Tapferkeit wegen der Zufälle erfodert, die bei dem Aneinanderstossen der Schiffe sich ereignen können; deßwegen pflegt man, wenn man auf den Feind läuft, die Segel allmählig auf den Mast zu brassen, um die Geschwindigkeit des Schiffes zu verringern, und den Anlauf sanfter zu machen.

Das

Digitized by Google

Das Bombardiren eines Havens geschieht meistentheils des Nachts, damit die Schiffe den feindlichen Schüssen destoweniger ausgesetzt sind. Man stellt die Bombardir-Gallioten alsdann, so viel sich's thun läßt, hinter kleine Inseln oder Land; will man aber einen Haven nur im Vorbeigehen insultiren, so bedient man sich der Gallioten, die im Segeln Bomben werfen; diese letztern werden alsdann nicht, wie die erstern, mit bewafneten Schaluppen zu ihrem Schutz wider den Angrif kleiner Fahrzeuge versehen.

Man sagt, daß ein Schiff eine schöne Batterie habe, wenn die Stückpforten der ersten Batterie 5 bis 6 Fuß über dem Wasser sind; man nennt die Batterie unterm Wasser, wenn diese Erhöhung nur 3 Fuß betr.gt.

Die Feuertöpfe, die man sonderlich beim Entern von den Segelstangen und Mastkörben in das feindliche Schiff wirft, sind irdene mit Granaden und Pulver angefüllte Töpfe, die von aussen brennende Lunten haben, welche es anstecken, wenn sie beim Fallen zerbrechen.

Bei

Digitized by Google

Bei einigen Nationen ist es das Amt des Schiffpredigers, während des Gefechtes in der Pulverkammer zu verweilen, und das nöthige Pulver abzureichen.

Das Verhältniß des Ranges der See-Offiziere gegen Offiziere bei der Landmacht ist folgendes: Der Schiffslieutenant hat den Rang vom Kapitain, der kommandirende Schiffsmeister vom Major; der Kapitain in den 3 ersten Jahren vom Obristlieutenant, nach Verlauf dieser Zeit vom Obristen; der Kommodore, vom Brigadier; der Rear-Admiral, vom General-Major; der Vice-Admiral, vom General-Lieutenant; die Admirale der verschiedenen Flaggen, von den Generalen.

Der

Digitized by Google

Der
See-Sturm.

Es ist unmöglich, eine wahre Schilderung dieser schreckbaren Ereigniß aufzuführen, in welcher alle Vorfälle so entworfen wären, wie sie sich in solchen unglücklichen Augenblicken zutragen; nachfolgendes dient nur uns genauere Kenntnisse hievon zu verschaffen.

Als das Schiff, Il vitorioso, welches der vortrefliche spanische Seeheld, Fernando Luquez, unter seinem Kommando führte, und dem Schicksal, wodurch ein Theil der Flotte aufgerieben worden, entgangen zu seyn glaubte, sich den spanischen Küsten zu nähern, im Laufe war, wurde, während eines kurzen Zeitraums, die Luft unvermuthet dunkel. Man hörte sowohl von Seiten der vollen See, als auch vom Lande ein dumpfes Getöse, das von Zeit zu Zeit stärker, und endlich in ein fürchterliches Brausen sich umänderte. Diese Vorspiele des bevorstehenden Sturms beschäf-

schäftigten alles, was im Schiffe war, zu Einziehung der Segel. Noch war man nicht völlig mit dieser Arbeit zu Stande, als schon ein heftiger Wind, der seine Richtung von Westen her nahm, die Wasserwogen aufzuschwellen anfieng, die Schiffseile unter einander warf, in die noch nicht eingezogenen Segel sich mit Gewalt legte, und endlich das Schiff durch den Ungestüm der Wellen, so an selbes schlugen, wankend und krachend machte.

Luquez, der den Grimm der stürmenden See schon öfters erfahren hatte, traf die zweckmäßigsten Vorkehrungen. Der Steuermann, in Vereinigung der ganzen Schiffsequipage, war zwar anfänglich bemühet, dem Sturm Widerstand zu leisten, indem er das Steuerruder bald auf die rechte, bald auf die linke Seite wandte: weil aber der Sturmwind viel stärker, als die Kunst, mit der er sich demselben zu widersetzen bestrebte, war, auch das Brausen der Wellen und der Winde unter den erschrecklichsten Donnerschlägen die Matrosen verhinderten, seine Befehle zu verstehen, und nach solchen sich zu richten, so mußte er das Steuerruder fahren lassen, die Segel gänzlich

ein-

Digitized by Google

einzuziehen trachten, und sich übrigens dem Schicksal überlassen.

Noch hatte man nicht geglaubt, daß der Sturm anhaltend seyn würde; allein die sich von Zeit zu Zeit vermehrende Ungestümigkeit lehrte sie bald eines andern. Die brausenden Meereswogen erhuben nun das Schiff bis an den Himmel, bald aber theilten sie sich von einander, und führten es mit sich in den tiefsten Abgrund. Ob nun wohl der Tag in eine Nacht verwandelt worden, und dennoch erst um die fünfte Nachmittagsstunde seyn mochte, wurde es doch so stockfinster, daß man keinen Stich sehen konnte; nur die häufigen Blitze klärten die Luft mit einem hellscheinenden plötzlichen Feuer zuweilen auf, daß man die Wellen, so wie Berge in die Höhe stiegen, und bald schwarz, bald weiß vom Schaum waren, sehen konnte; welche dann, indem eine über die andere hinstürzte, und gleichsam in einem Wirbel umgetrieben wurden, mit solchem Ungestüme an das Schiff schlugen, daß man bei jedem solchen entsetzlichen Schlage befürchten mußte, das Schiff würde zerschmettert werden.

Digitized by Google

Luquez, den die Standhaftigkeit noch nicht verlassen hatte, aber dennoch das Aergste zu befürchten wähnte, ließ das Schiff, um selbes von der bevorstehenden Gefahr ihres Unterganges zu retten, durch Kapern der Mastbäume, und Auswerfung der Kanonen sowohl, als alles dessen, was selbes beschwerte, erleichtern, und die Boote in Bereitschaft halten, auf welchen, wenn schon keine Rettung mehr zu hoffen wäre, man wenigstens das Leben der Menschen auf jeden Fall zu erhalten besorgt seyn müßte.

Inzwischen rückte die Nacht immer mehr an, und der Sturm nahm mit selber gleichfalls zu. Das vorhin durch die Donnerschläge entstandene Licht der Blitze verschwand augenblicklich wieder, und es wurde noch finsterer, als es vor dem gewesen, so, daß man wahr zu seyn befand, daß, wenn zwey ihrer Natur nach sich widersprechende Dinge einander entgegen gesetzt werden, eines das andere nur mehr klärer und scheinbarer darstelle, also zwar, daß, nachdem wir vorher alles ausnehmen konnten, es nun in einem Augenblick so finster wurde, daß man die Dicke der Finsterniß gleichsam mit Händen greifen konnte.

Die

Digitized by Google

Die Umstände schienen nun bedenklich zu werden, und der Muth entsank den Herzhaftesten. Die Winde wechselten unaufhörlich, und warfen das Schiff von dieser auf jene Seite, der eine schlug dasselbe zur rechten, der andere zur linken Hand, noch ein anderer aber, der weit heftiger, als die vorigen waren, umwickelte dasselbe, und drehete es bei einer Viertelstunde in einem Wirbel herum, daß man das Zerberſten für diesmahl als unvermeidlich gewärtigen mußte.

So still als es vorhin im Schiffe war, wo man nur einzelne Seufzer hörte, so entstund nun ein jammerndes und wehklagendes Heulen des den Tod vor Augen sehenden Schiffsvolkes. So schreckbar auch dieser Umstand schon an sich selbst war, so wurde er in diesem kritischen Augenblick durch das Brausen des Meeres noch weit schreckbarer, da dasselbe zur Vermehrung des Jammers aus dem Abgrund der hohlen Klippen ein so grausames Getöse hören ließ, daß nun die Entschlossensten zaghaft wurden. Das Sausen der Winde zwischen dem Tau- und Täfelwerk, und das dadurch verursachte Krachen machte die Haare gegen Berg steigen. Himmel und Wasser schienen gleich-

sam eine Vermischung vom Feuer, Finsterniß, weiß und blauer Farbe zu seyn, und stellten dem erschrockenen Auge bei dem treffenden Blitzen den alten Zustand, da vor Erschaffung der Welt alles noch in einem Klumpen untereinander vermischet war, vor, wenn man sich solches anders vor Schrecken hätte einbilden können.

Bei all diesem unbeschreiblichen Elend, war es noch ein kleiner Trost, für diese Unglücklichen, daß der Tag anzubrechen schien, wo sie doch der Schein einer etwaigen Hofnung zur Rettung ihres Lebens beseelen konnte. Abgemattet durch die Wuth dieses zwölfstündigen genausamen Sturms, der statt abzunehmen, nur durch kleine Absätze oder Pausen neue Kräften gleichsam sammelte, um mit mehr Ungestüm toben zu können.

Wind, und Feuer der Donnerschläge waren bisher das Schreckenbild dieser Elenden; mit dem anbrechenden Tage aber mußte sie auch noch ein der Sündfluth ähnlich, und anhaltender Regen treffen, dieser stürzte mit einer solchen Gewalt auf das so sehr beschädigte Schiff, daß selbes gleichsam zwischen zweyen Meeren schwebte. Alles droh-

drohte nun den gänzlichen Untergang; und ob sich Luquez und seine Schiffsequipage keines guten Ausganges zu versehen hatte, so beschlossen sie doch, bevor sie das Schiff verlassen wollten, das äusserste abzuwarten, da sie der Himmel noch dadurch begünstiget hatte, das beyde Boote zu ihrer Rettung vorhanden wären. Allein dieser fatale Augenblick war nicht mehr weit entfernt. Alle Elementen stürmten zugleich auf sie los, um sie zu vertilgen, es erfolgten Donnerschläge, deren jeder sie beben machte, und sie fiengen nun an zu zweifeln, ob sie durch Schiffbruch oder durch den Donner umkommen würden; beydes kündigte ihnen den Tod an, den sie entweder durch das Wasser oder das Feuer empfangen sollten.

Mittlerweile zertrümmerte eine ungemein grosse Welle durch einen der heftigsten Schläge das Vordertheil des Schiffes. Dieser Zufall brachte Luquez zum Entschluß, die Boote zu besteigen, und mit seinen unglücklichen Gefährten doch wenigstens zu trachten, wie immer möglich, obwohlen mitten in der See, und noch unwissend in welcher Weltgegend, bei so gestalten Umständen, das Leben zu retten. Mit aller Eile warfen sie

sich

sich in dieselben, um vor dem unvermeidlichen Sinken des Schiffes auf diese Art Rettung zu finden, als ein Donnerschlag auch in das Hintertheil des Schiffes, und zugleich auch drey der Bootsleute zu Boden schlug. Nun entstund unter den noch übrigen ein erbärmliches Geschrey, das Wasser strohmte mit Gewalt in selbes, und die noch darinn vorhandenen stürzten sich in die neben haltenden Boote, um dem Tode zu entgehen. Allein es währte nicht lange, so warf eine neue Windsbrause das schon halb zerschmetterte Schiff gegen eine verborgene Klippe, an welcher es mit einem erschrecklichen Getöse in viele Stücke zerbarst.

Luquez der mit seinen Geretteten ein gleiches Schicksal auf diesem stürmenden Elemente zu befahren hatte, mußte die Wuth desselben noch gegen 3 Stunde aushalten; wo sich aber nach dieser Zeit die Stille nach und nach wieder einstellte, der er auch seine Rettung zu verdanken hatte. Nach einem ganztägigen Herumirren, wobei sie schon vom Hunger geplaget wurden, trafen sie zwey ihrer Schiffe an, die sie an Bord nahmen, und von einer andern Art Todes, als die vorige war, der sie so glücklich entgangen sind, neuerdings retteten.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google